

PLYMOUTH:

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NINE YEARS
OF AN
A C T O R ' S L I F E .

ROBERT DYER,

*Late of the Theatres-Royal Plymouth, Worcester, Derby, Nottingham,
Taunton, Barnstaple, &c. &c.*

“ USE EVERY MAN AFTER HIS DESERT.”

LONDON :

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AND

EDWARD NETTLETON, PLYMOUTH.

P R E F A C E .

To MY FRIENDS,

And they are many and estimable, I dedicate NINE YEARS OF AN ACTOR'S LIFE. For them my work may possess an engrossing attraction, since it has been written with a regard to our mutual honour, for the same page which eulogizes their virtue is a record of my place in their regard:—to them, at least, I hope it will not appear

“A tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying—nothing.”

PREFACE.

TO MY SUBSCRIBERS,

And a more honourable and extensive list has rarely issued from a country press, I offer my grateful acknowledgments; and if my book is found worthy their patronage,

“ ——— my golden dream is out.”

TO MY CRITICS

Let me say, in extenuation of the general crudeness, and the probable want of finish in every chapter of this my first essay in literature, that the *necessity* for immediate publication prevented the minute correction of each error,—yet I disclaim the cant of indulgence towards my faults:—doubtless they are many, but they are now before the world, and therefore challenge censure:—still I deprecate severe criticism, for none will

“ Hear me for my *cause*, and be silent.”

PREFACE.

TO MY READERS

I would remark—the published life of every man, no matter how exalted, or how humble his rank, is a moral lesson, not only to that “circle of which he strives to be the centre,” but to the world in its reflective character; for his virtues are tacitly imitated—his vices shunned—his successful leading is followed, and his ill-fortune is used as a friendly monitor.

Secrecy is the bane of society. If there were nothing concealed, there would be no suspicion of each others motives. If all men thought and spoke the truth, and acted without disguise, confidence would be established, and the world become better. Influenced by this opinion, I most freely acknowledge, that, although “Reputation” is, in my esteem, a jewel of great price,

PREFACE.

This work has been undertaken with a view to more than mere honour. However, my primary aim in publishing is to instruct and amuse ;—if I succeed in the attempt

“ Your voices therefore.”

“ Your most sweet voices.”

Plymouth, December, 1833.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are circumstances, in my Early Days, which led perhaps to the “ Nine Years of an Actor’s Life,” and I therefore trust I shall be excused, and endured, if I introduce them as a Prologue to the right merry Comedy of my THESPIAN CAREER ; for this advantage may be derived from the detail—it will show how, from a school recitation, I was led on, step by step, until at last I became a *professional* man : and I hope the aspiring young hero will be warned by my experience, to hold fast by whatever occupation he may be engaged in, rather than venture on a theatrical life, in which honesty is a “ starving quality,” and virtue a thing of no repute.

I pass over the events of my private history, by merely stating, that, bred in the confident expectation of an independence, my Father thought a business of no value to my future prospects, though at his death he left me destitute—giving to others every sixpence of my Mother’s

property, (for not one farthing else had he to leave to his children by his first marriage) and for reason than this—I would not suffer her memory traduced by parties, who could only hope to make their tool, by stigmatizing and incensing me. Mother, if she had not been duped into the mistake of making a settlement of her property on her offspring, different had been the lot of her Son ! But the Devil, the Deceived, and the Traducer, are all in their power, and from this time, the bitterness of my wounds shall not disturb the place of their rest, though temptation and misery were once before me. Had I not found a home beneath the roof of an affectionate Brother, the highway, the knapsack, or the jacket, must have been my doom. “ Evil got, even as it goes,” says the old proverb ; and were the least revengeful nature it would be fully gratified by knowing, that what should have been mine is now dissipated. Some time ago, when the little wants of those dear ones, who are dependent on me, are left unsatisfied, I am out of temper, but the angry feeling soon subsides in gratitude to that beneficent Providence, whose protecting goodness has now upheld me and mine in comfort and respectability. I have done with the subject of my wrongs for the present. Apologizing for this digression, let me return to the subject of my youth.

If I recollect rightly, a taste for declamation was amongst my earliest tendencies, and a love for oratory amongst my most boyish affections. I remember well, during the residence of our family at Liskeard, I

take the lead in the Christmas Plays, in which I made extemporaneous speeches about blood—and death—and my heart—always finishing by stabbing myself with a butcher's steel, to the great admiration of my fellow urchins, who flocked in crowds to the kitchen of one of my father's workmen, whenever little Bobby Dyer was going to kill himself. When a company of strollers converted the village barn into a theatre, though I was not permitted to attend the scenic wonders, the fame of a limping comedian, who sang the comic song of the "Poor old Woman of Eighty," reached me ; and many a time have I watched the coming of this little man in the streets, delighted at an opportunity to pay my tribute of admiration for his understood ability, by lisping out, "How d'ye do, Mister Little Old Woman of Eighty." But the first bias given to my incipient inclination was received at a *Grace Night*, (1) during my probation at Bodmin School. There I recited "Pity the Sorrows of a Poor old Man," and some other pieces, with such unbounded applause, that at once my pre-eminence was acknowledged ; and the "Cornwall Gazette" of the ensuing week paragraphed *Master Dyer* as a Young Roscius. At this time I had never seen a play ; but at the next vacation the wonders of the Mimic Scene broke on my enraptured senses, for, seated amongst the gods in the front seat of the gallery of the old Plymouth Theatre, I saw "She Stoops to Conquer," and the melo-drama of "The Lady of the Rock."—No god of the Heathen Mythology, seated on high Olympus, felt happier than I did on that eventful night. (2) Every circumstance—the music—the scenery—dresses

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—actors—all are as fresh in **my** memory, as the events of yesterday. The moment **the** curtain fell, I exclaimed “Now I will show the Bodmin Boys how to act,” and I did so; for my having *seen a play*, gave me such a decided superiority over all **my** school-fellows, that the Master left to me the task of **instruction**, and I became “Major Domo of the grand **family**.”—My fate was fixed—the young Dyer was all in all; for stamp, stare, noise, and impudence did for me, **what** it has done for many a vain pretender beside—made **me** celebrated.

Returned from school, I had **now** many opportunities of visiting the Theatre, much, by **the** way, against the wishes of my friends; and soon, on paying the sum of 15s. entrance, I became an acting member of **the** Stonehouse Amateur Company, on the Coal Quay!—Here, let me protest against the existence of such **societies**, for they are vicious in their construction, and fatal in their consequence. The only dishonest action I **ever** in my life committed was to support my expenses **in** a private theatre.—A member of this very company, *a corporal in the Marines*, (you cannot be select in mixed **society**) was broken to the ranks, tied up to the halberts, **and** flogged. I saw him faint under the torture, and all **for** some peculation in the Pay Office, to enable him **to** meet *his* expenses.—A young man of limited means **cannot** be conscientiously honest in a private theatre. **He has** to pay his entrance fee—his weekly subscription—**for** his books—his stage dresses: but here the evil does **not** end, for after the play it is usual to adjourn to some **tavern**, and there sip ale and flattery until the **amateur** is intoxicated by the

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strength of the one, and the sweets of the other. Granting, however, that a young man's pecuniary resources are equal to his expenditure, (3) if he be engaged in business he cannot be just to his employer; for time is necessary for study, and as time is his master's wealth, if he robs him of this, he may as well pick his master's pocket. Besides, there are strong and irresistible temptations to vice in the female society of a private theatre; and though I know many men who have passed unscathed, I do not know one amateur lady who has borne an unblemished reputation.

I would advise all young persons to shun even the atmosphere of a private theatre, for it will breed in them a love of idle pleasure, and, unless Fortune favours them, unfit them for the discharge of their duties as respectable men. Unfortunately, there is an infatuation in theatricals, against which reason and parental authority have no force; and I know no way of checking a tendency of this baneful nature, other than by calling in the power of the magistracy to suppress the *cause*. It is strange, that not one of my Coal Quay associates made the stage a profession. *Lyon*, the directing spirit of the establishment—the very pivot on which all subscription theatres turn, possessed and possesses considerable talent. He stands at the head of the *amateur genus*. A friend of mine, who now enjoys the reward of his perseverance and legal knowledge, certainly evinced great ability, and doubtless, had he studied Shakspeare as diligently as he has done Blackstone, he would have become as good a player as he is now a lawyer; but he never

formed a better judgment than when he determined to live by the law. Success on the stage depends on contingencies, but in the law merit is a sure passport to distinction. Second to my friend was an honest friend, who has since attained much eminence as an attorney. The struggle between those rival heroes was most exciting— one had the best of the game in dress, the other in talent, and the critics of the theatre,—gentlemen of the Dock-Yard—who usually sat behind the musicians—expressed their opinions in something like these words:— “Oh, d——n that —, he is sending the — to H——ll.” “Bravo! Bravo! —————— up again.” (4) My first appearance was as Valentine in *Richard III.* The manager of the theatre, however, was anxious that my continuance in the company was prevented, and I was compelled to remove to Bath, where, however, the mania for the stage was so strong in me, that my violent rehearsals once frightened a countryman, who came unexpectedly near me, into the belief that I was really mad. I visited the theatre frequently; and at length became a member of the *Pic-Nic* Society, and the companion of the leading actors, to whose favour my taking tickets at the box office in the first season proved a *passe-partout*. The benefit of the theatre, in my opinion, is the most debasing of all other amusements. It induces men to the solicitations of beggars, and it is observed, that the unanimity of a company is destroyed when benefits come on. There is then a competition to pounds, shillings, and pence; and men are overbearing and mean in love and money matters. It would be difficult to account for this cause of unpleasantry in the profession, if actors would form engagements on such terms, that actors

live without solicitation ; but managers think it their interest to make actors work for their salaries, though a respectability of conduct is said to be the only “means whereby they live.” *Actors* are, or should be, men of education and manners—in short, gentlemen,—and are esteemed as such, until a bill appears bearing the stigmatizing impress of “*For the Benefit of Mr. ——*.” The elegant Barry was introduced to a distinguished nobleman, who, on the next day being asked what he thought of the actor, replied “Oh, I thought him a perfect gentleman, until he asked me to take tickets for his benefit.”

During my visit to Bath, Kean made his first appearance, after his débüt in London. I was too young critically to appreciate his merits ; but the impression he made on me was of such power, that I followed him down to his Bristol engagement, and returned on his re-appearance in Bath. It was strange, that the Saturday night he first appeared in Bath, though every part of the house beside was crowded, scarcely two seats of the gallery were full; but after that night, room could not be found for a single auditor more. His first night at Bristol was an overflow. I went with a party, and paid box admission, but box places could not be obtained—we tried the pit, and were equally unsuccessful—and only by determination we at last obtained seats in the gallery, at box prices. I remember, that on this day news had arrived of the surrender of the French capital to the Allies ; and at the close of the play, a cry was raised for the “Downfall of Paris.” No attention was paid to this call by the orchestra, and the farce of *Comus* began. The uproar was excessive. At last

Bengough, who enacted *Comus*, addressed Lord—
pause being gained, he told the audience that Mr—
had said he did not know a tune called the “D—
Paris,” but if the audience pleased, he would play
save the King.” Leaders should in all cases of
excitement obey a public call—it is dangerous
with the many-headed monster; and though Mr—
might not have heard of the “Downfall of P—
surely must have heard of the “Battle of P—
I think, however, the audience punished his refusal
tune, by making him play *two*—“God save the Queen”
and “Rule Britannia.” Musicians never like the per-
formance of more than is set down for them. Previ-
my return home, I had an opportunity of seeing a
mine of comic talent, whom Boaden, in his life, calls
“the Jordan.” I saw her at Newbury, in *Violent*,
Miss Hoyden, and *Nell*; and to the end of my theatrical
recollections I shall never forget her. She was at
her decline—but fascinating in decay. I believe it was
nearly her last appearance on the stage. Her fall may
be a warning against the delusiveness—the un-
reliability of theatrical fame:—for she, the beloved of a prince,
favourite of kings and nobles—the observed of all eyes—
as beautiful as highly talented and amiable—like a flower
neglected, and died so!

On my return home, I again joined my Companions
associates, and making Kean my model, I astonished
friends, who mistook my bombastic imitation of the
tragedian for fire and improvement. I certainly fired
the *first* and *second* gentlemen; and our private

urged me to dispute the throne. My abiding with the company was not, however, of long continuance—other views opened—and after playing *Othello*, with a party of amateurs, for the benefit of poor old Dunn, the stage tailor, my mania subsided into the dignity of an amateur critic, whose judgment, rendered acute, and confirmed by an imagined knowledge of plays and players acquired behind the scenes of a private theatre, nothing could satisfy. Many an anonymous criticism of mine has been inserted in the London dramatic works, condemnatory of the reputation of men, for whose talent I have now a high opinion. These “stabs in the dark” were afterwards heaped, (as I shall have means to prove hereafter) like coals of fire upon my head; and it did not lessen the agony I suffered, when, trying to lay the flattering unction to my soul, I thought some inexperienced and petulant boy had laid on the lash which made me writhe. I myself had said enough to wound the sensitiveness of the most callous; and it is therefore to be regretted that editors insert communications, which, did they see the authors, they would reject on the reasonable supposition, that boys cannot have experience sufficient to form correct opinions of the merits of actors. I am not to deny, that a youth of sixteen may write a mechanical article, of a very imposing sound; but judgment must be wanting; and the reputation of a meritorious individual may be sacrificed, merely because a boy is displeased, and the boy can write. Editors should be especially careful that their pages be not made the vehicles of slander, by refusing to admit any communication that does not

All our arrangements complete, the eventful day of the 21st December arrived, on the evening of which we calculated on acquiring great Thespian laurels when, oh, horror ! my Brother Manager, the representative of *Jabal* and *Buskin*, fell sick, (a fright it was said) and but for the ready study, and the desire to oblige, of Lyon, my old private associate, the play could not have been performed. He however came forward, and sustained *Jabal* and *Buskin* with considerable ability. The house was filled to the extent of £77, and a balance of £37 was paid to the treasurers of the two charities, which they acknowledged in a public advertisement to this effect :

“ The Treasurers of the Lying-in Charity and the Benevolent Society desire to acknowledge the Receipt of £37. 7s. 6d from Mr. Robert Dyer and Mr. Renouf, Managers of the Amateur Play, in furtherance of ten pounds, given by the Managers of the Amateur Play, to the Treasurers of the Benevolent, to whom, and to the gentlemen, they acknowledge their acknowledgments.”

A singular objection was started to the receipt for the use of the charity, by the amiable treasurer of the Benevolent Society. As a Quaker she had scruples about appropriating money acquired in an *uncharitable* manner ; and I thought the Lying-in Charity would have been £20 the richer for the fair friend’s scruples. I was a member of a committee, which I attended, proving less scrupulous than she, the “ wages of sin ” were handed over to the original purpose of charity. The play went off admirably, and the next day many of the most respectable men called and complimented me, not only

individual exertions, but on the talent displayed by my friends. The Telegraph however was silent as to our relative merits, and feeling that this evident slight originated in private pique, I must confess that ever after I gave vent to my spleen by always speaking of the editor as “*Vegetable Mutton*.” (8) One of the professionals (the Laureate’s brother) toaded me to a surfeit; for according to his expressed opinion, Kean, Kemble, &c. &c. would be thrown, unregretted, into “the tomb of the Capulets,” the moment I chose to illuminate the theatrical world by my appearance in London. Vanity is not my ruling passion, or the Laureate’s brother had hurried me at once to metropolitan damnation; notwithstanding, he was truly diverting. He perhaps thought it likely I might eclipse Kean, and Kemble, but to eclipse *him* was impossible; yet under the guise of enthusiasm, his egotism was pardonable. He had received much applause at Stratton, in Cornwall, and before rehearsal we fell into conversation on his popularity.

I asked his opinion of Richard the Third. “Why, Sir,” said he, “it is a fine part; but, Sir, all the performers I have ever seen, fail in it! I do not except Kean, that great Colossus of the Stage. He *may* be clever, Sir—he no doubt is so, Sir, for it cannot be supposed that a London audience is uncertain in its taste; however, there are those, his superiors, who at this moment ‘*pine* their hours upon the stage,’ as Shakspeare says. Once, Sir, I enacted Richmond to Kean’s Richard; to be sure, he carried every thing before him for the first four acts, but in the *fifth* (I say nothing) his by-play, (he gave all his *tricks* very

forcibly) was lost. *Richmond*, Sir, was all in all ; and certainly, Sir, the Critics of Stratton have as much discrimination as those who sit on the Benches of Drury Lane. He threw down his foil—stampt—stared—pushed and grinned—puckered up his mouth, as if about to whistle before he fell ; the House was in a roar, but the Critics of Stratton were not to be caught by this fanfaronade of action. No—the *Red Rose* was their favorite. Poor Kean, ha, ha, ha, he took all the applause to himself, and died most *terrifically* ! By the bye, Sir, did you ever observe his new readings, or points, as we call them ?—all very fine ; but he grasps at the shadow and loses the substance !—‘for instance,’ as poor Paddy Wright used to say, Richard talks a good deal about his beaver, and so forth. Now, Sir, would not any man of *superior penetration* have rushed into the battle, clad in complete steel ? To be sure—I always do ;—but Mister Kean, Sir, appears in all ‘the gaudy trappings of a court.’ Poor fellow, he laughed most immoderately to see me with my ‘beaver on,’ the night I enacted Richard ; sheer envy, by the gods, for the Critics of Stratton admired it much ; and the Critics of Stratton are sensible men. In the Tent scene he gives the line ‘Conscience avaunt, I’ll none of thee,’ in a voice of thunder, willing, no doubt—ha, ha, ha—to let his guards know he was frightened. I, Sir, give it thus, in a suppressed tone, fearful, as it were, the very stones might hear, and testify of Richard’s fear. ‘CONSCIENCE avaunt, I’ll none of THEE,’ laying, if you observe, the emphasis on ‘conscience’ and ‘thee,’ the one word having a positive connexion with the other ;—the Critics

of Stratton perceived the justness of this. Again, Sir, Kean gives it, ‘Saddle white Surrey for the field—to-morrow,’ pausing before ‘to-morrow,’ as dubious it might never come. Now, Sir, Richard must have had many horses, and therefore, with this idea of the author’s meaning, I give it ‘Saddle’—(a long pause, considering, as it were, which horse I would have)—‘Saddle—white Surrey for the field to-morrow.’ The Critics of Stratton were in raptures at this. You remember, of course, Kean’s manner of giving his ‘Good Night,’ breaking off most unceremoniously from his conversation. Leaving his courtiers in gaping wonderment at his manner, he says, ‘Good Night,’ and exits in a hurry. *Ridiculous! ridiculous!* You, Sir, as a man of sense, must think it so. I, Sir, supposing the crooked-back tyrant to be much agitated, hurry through the scene, anxious—(you perceive my motive, Sir; the Critics of Stratton did, and honoured me with three—THREE distinct rounds of applause)—anxious to gain repose, I desire the solitude of my tent;—I therefore pass quickly off the stage, without saying the ‘Good Night,’ but, as I also suppose Richard to be a man of politeness, I return and say, ‘Good Night,’—thus. Oh, Sir, the Critics of Stratton, *they* are men of discernment, and if the London Critics had their judgment, I should at this moment be at the head of the Tragic Actors!” The stroller then went through the scene, stopping frequently to remark on his friends, the ‘Critics of Stratton,’—dashed through the door—returned—and bowing low, gave *his* ‘Good Night.’ “I had forgotten,” said he, re-entering, “to mention one thing. Richard says ‘Now

are our brows bound with victorious wreathes.' History does not say Richard was a liar!—and therefore, Sir, he would not *say so*, unless he had wreathes on his brow—WREATHES, Sir! 'Under this impression,' as Paddy Wright used to say, I wear two. There's an idea, Sir. The Critics of Stratton were in raptures. Kean laughed at this too, Sir. Look to yourself, said I, ha, ha, ha, look to yourself. I had him there, Sir,—had not I? Oh, when will merit be rewarded? When shall I appear on the London Boards?" "When," I replied, "the Critics of London judge the same as your friends, the Critics of Stratton." "True, Sir,—'your most humble servant,' as Paddy Wright used to say."

About a twelvemonth after this, I made another amateur essay, in connection with the officers of the Army and Navy, and I certainly remember this event with the more pleasure, in that it introduced me to Lieut. Johnson, then Flag Lieutenant to the late gallant Viscount Exmouth. This gentleman had written "The Loyal House that Jack built," by no means inferior to Hone's publication; and he flatteringly submitted it to my judgment, as to its merits, and the propriety of publishing. Of its merits my opinion was decided; yet, I ventured to make a few alterations, for which reason he thenceforward called his production *our work*; but I thought the time was gone by for publishing, and he agreed: but the love of being in print was too strong to be overcome, and he requested fifty copies to be printed for distribution amongst his private friends. Shortly after, he stopped at my door, and said, with extreme good-nature, "Dyer, *our Poem*

has been read by His Majesty." From that time we have never met ; but his urbanity has lived in my memory, and "*our Poem*" being read by His Majesty has often been a subject of proud boast. The characters assigned me, Sir Charles Cropland, (Poor Gentleman) and Lovel, (High Life below Stairs) were by no means in my line ; and notwithstanding the newspapers (9) spoke well of me, my judicious friends, who had not witnessed my previous performances, forming a judgment of my merits by the present standard, pronounced my attempt a decided failure —decreed me without pretensions even to the title of a common-place amateur—and so ridiculed my imperfections of taste and person, that my dramatic *furore* was entirely checked, and for many months I never read a play, nor visited a theatre. But the flame was only smothered,— "not burnt out ;" for tempted again to the play, the demerits of the leading actor (whose performances the following night I mischievously placarded as a *horrid murder*) so stirred up my latent feelings of ambition, that I determined to rival him ; and forthwith applied to Mr. Chaplin, then manager of the Taunton Theatre. To this application I received the subjoined reply.

" Theatre, Taunton,

" Feb. 6th, 1820.

" Dear Sir,

" My term of management ends in March, and having sunk a considerable sum of money during the time I've held the Theatres, I have no wish or intention to extend that term. Had I been likely to continue Manager, I should have felt much pleasure in availing myself of your polite offer, and can only express my regret, that such is not the case. The candour and

good sense visible in your letter encourage me to ho-
take a few words of advice, as it's meant ; and as I have
honour of knowing you personally, you'll give me credit
cerity of intention. There is no situation in life exer-
unpleasantries, and when you speak of dependance, you
remember there's no human being so totally dependant
actor—subject to the caprice of a manager, and the c-
that many-headed monster the public. If men rose in
fession by an honest exertion of their talent *on the*
should say, go on and prosper. Such is not the way. 'T
out of the theatre that gives success, and unless you can
up your mind to such a miserable prostitution of time and
honest feeling, abandon all thoughts of the stage for ever.
Believe me, in the present day, after all, 'tis a profession
tolerated. You may think this all common-place, but if
if you become an actor, ere *three years expire* you'll per-
subscribe to the truth of my opinions.—I conceive I must
charge an imperious *duty* in the delivery of them ; and
me, with best wishes for your success, either *on or off the*

“Yours, &c.

“T. A. CHAPLIN

Here was advice, every word of which experie-
proved true ; and I would have it engraved as a
admonition against the indulgence of a theatrical
tion. *It is acting out of doors* that alone secures suc-
and no *state is so truly dependant as that of a*
Advice however was lost on me. The school-boy
tion had stamped my fate, and I longed for an oppor-
to verify the Laureate's brother's predictions : that
tunity soon presented itself. An itinerant company
Devonport, the leading actor, Mr. Butler, having
knowledge of my fame, solicited me to appear at
benefit ; I consented to play *Hotspur*, and instantly
into training, his night coming on the following
Fond as I had ever been of plays—with the except-

my *Pic-Nic* friends in Bath, who always dressed like gentlemen, the Laureate's brother, and Mr. Butler—of players I had no knowledge, *off* the stage; there, they dazzled with dress and language not their own, though I fancied men who looked so fine at night must look fine by day; at least I thought the heroic sentiments they were constantly in the habit of uttering in imaginary characters would naturally give a tone to their own language. My amazement was excessive when, on attending my first rehearsal with the “irregular regulars,” I heard slang and vulgarisms in abundance. I saw in Lady Percy—“Dido a dowdy;”—and the gentlemen such, that when Manager Dawson said, “I'll not march through Coventry with them,”—I forgot the words were Shakspeare's, and gave him credit for so respectable a resolution. The gentleman who played Blunt had a delightful black eye, which, on inquiry, I found he received as a royal favour, in a pitched battle, the previous day, with the gentleman who enacted the King; whilst the representatives of Poins and Sir Richard Vernon were the seconds; and my Lord of Westmoreland, Gadshill, and the 1st Carrier, “spectators of the fight:” but my horror exceeded all bounds when, looking at my Herculean frame, like a butcher on a huge quarter of beef, which he must carry off spite of his objections to the weight, Falstaff said “How shall we get off this *man*.” I felt disgusted at the familiar manner of the stroller, and resolved never more to subject myself to such rudeness. But the die was cast. I played with great applause, and the ensuing paper said

“ But the novelty of the evening was the ‘ Hotspur,’ an amateur, (Mr. Robert Dyer) of this town. Perhaps no character in the drama is more difficult to delineate than that of ‘ Percy,’ and it would be no small praise to say, it was a failure: but we must go further, and pronounce it a success. Indeed Mr. D’s figure and accomplishments, and the high talent he displayed, could not fail, we think, to secure him an elevated rank on the boards, were he to embark in the ardour the profession for which Nature seems to have destined him.”

The following week I enacted *Wallace*, for the benefit of the actor’s benefit, and Mr. Butler having left the company in the ensuing week I formed an engagement with Mr. Dawson, manager of the Devonport and other theatres, to play his leading business, signifying, the first character in tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, and ballet—furnished with my own wardrobe, and paying my travelling expenses, a magnificent salary of 15s. per week! Thus unexampledly I passed the Rubicon, and thus commenced my ‘ Years of an Actor’s Life.’

F I R S T Y E A R .

The hour's now come ;
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear ;
Obey, and be attentive.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the 29th May, 1822, in the delightful town of Dartmouth, I made my first appearance as a *paid* performer, sustaining Dick Dowlas in the Heir at Law, under the assumed name of *Dudley*. St. John, or any other equally romantic surname, would have suited to the "full as well," but *D.* was an initial on my linen, and therefore *Dudley* was chosen. A *crowded audience* of some *six persons* seemed pleased by my performance, for they positively sat out the whole play. Their applause cheered me to exertion, and for the remainder of the season I studied full five hundred lines a day; nor did I ever go on the stage imperfect but twice—once in *Lord Hastings*, and once in *Inkle*. The language of *Rowe* is proverbially difficult,

and Inkle did not please me. Old staggers are never non-plussed if the author fails them. They say *something*, and so they do not *stick*, as it is technically termed, an audience rarely finding out the mistake, even though the vilest trash is substituted for the finest poetry. On the first representation of Pizarro, in the Bath Theatre, vast expense was lavished on its production, and Barrymore, the original Pizarro, was expressly engaged for the piece. The house was crowded to excess. Intense anxiety was alike felt by the public and the actors ; amongst the latter, the event impressed the meanest with ideas of consequence, and even the call-boy imagined the success of the play depended on his individual efforts. The play began, and the vociferous Barrymore trod the boards with metropolitan importance, when the gentleman, who enacted Davilla, came on, and either from anxiety, or perhaps, struck by the brilliancy of the house, he stood as it were dumb. Pizarro thundered forth “ How now, Davilla ? ” He should have answered “ My Lord, amongst the palm trees, on the hills, we have surprised an old cacique, &c.” but he was silent. Again Barrymore cried “ How now, Davilla ? ”—No answer. Again, but in vain. At length there was a dead silence, when the terrified Davilla made a violent effort at recovery, and stammered out “ My Lord, what is predicted is sure to come to pass ; ”—and then, the spell being broken, he caught the prompter’s voice, and went on with, “ My Lord, among the palm trees, &c. &c.” The house did not perceive the blunder. The late Mr. Thornton, manager of the Windsor Theatre, had a great abhorrence of a *stage wait*, and once, during

the representation of the farce "Of Age To-morrow," the Frederick not being ready, he seized an inoffensive scene shifter with, "Damn it, Sir, the stage waits, why don't *you*, go on." "I Sir," said the astonished man,— "Yes, you Sir,—don't you see the stage waits, you scoundrel!—go on." "Lord, Sir, what shall I say?" "Say any thing, you blackguard, go on," and on he pushed him; much to the amusement of Lady Brumback, and not to the dissatisfaction of the nautical audience, for the fellow shouted "Nelson for ever!" and came off amidst thunders of applause.

I have inserted these anecdotes to maintain my position, that if the stage goes on, an audience will not detect errors. I was a young actor, and had no confidence to hide my defects, and, it is therefore probable, my imperfect characters were truly ludicrous;—neither had I the art to help my memory, as an amateur once did when called on to play the Ghost to Harry Johnson's Hamlet. He wrote his *cues*, and stuck them on the top of his truncheon, and it was whimsical to see the Royal Dane elevate his baton to the line of sight, at the commencement of Hamlet's speeches, to be in readiness for their termination. Spite of my imperfections, however, the Dartmouth public endured me; and although my *benefit* proved a *loss* of 15s. I was not dispirited. My enthusiasm could not be suppressed by the paltry consideration of money. The inhabitants of Dartmouth are not liberal supporters of the Drama, for the excellent Dowton, who joined us during the first fortnight of my initiation, had only £7 for his benefit; and afterwards, my friend John Brunton, with

Yates, and Mrs Yates, (then Miss Brunton) assisted by a talented company, were obliged to dismiss on the first night, and only tricked them into a support of £30 per night for the three following nights, by sending the stage servants in their splendid liveries to the principal inn, and thence parading them with punch and sandwiches to the theatre, for the entertainment of the actors ; as if, in defiance, to show the natives that without their patronage the poor players "could be jolly." Dowton could not bear the neglect of the Dartmouthians with similar good-humour — he was seriously offended, and one night, mortified no doubt at playing his Sir John to nearly empty benches, he vented his spleen on every body. I had especially excited his anger, by playing *Hotspur* in the manner of Kean, and on my making an exit he beckoned me to him, and fixing an ireful eye on me, said "Why the devil do you snarl in that damnable way—you have a good voice of your own, therefore don't spoil it, by imitating that bugbear, Kean." The *bugbear*, *Kean*, sounded but harshly in my ear, for he was the god of my idolatry, and I replied, rather hastily, "I am not aware of imitating the great Tragedian, though I readily confess such is my admiration of his style, that what the cynical call his faults are to me, beauties." "Admiration ! beauties ! stuff ! I tell you, Sir, the man's an impostor, and the humbug will soon be detected. His acting is exaggeration—not one grain of nature in it. Why, Sir, I was in company with Lord —, Sir Thomas —, and the Earl —, one night, just after Kean's appearance, when George — came in ; Lord — said "What do you think of the

new actor?" "Think of him," said George, "why, my Lord, the thing won't do—it is a burlesque on Dame Nature. I'll illustrate. Most men, on seeing a favorite dish on the table would simply say 'I'll thank you for a bit of that pie,' this man enters—starts back—looks—licks his lips—points with extended finger thrice at the object of his longing—then growls forth 'I'll thank you—for—a bit—of—that—pie!' I made some allowance for the acrimony with which Dowton told this story, remembering, that a few weeks before he had left Drury-Lane in dudgeon, because Kean's name appeared in the bills in larger letters than his. Oh! these players are the most jealous creatures in existence—for example: Dowton, whose fair fame feared no competitor, would allow his rival no merit, as if his reputation could only be upheld by another's detraction.

Having finished the season at Dartmouth, our next town was Bodmin, where, certainly, the happiest of my days were passed. There dwelt, and there still dwell, some of my dearest friends, and but for their retiring natures, this page should be the record of their names and virtues. My affection for them was among my best and earliest feelings, and will cease only when feeling is dead within me. Here I spent my school-boy days, and, in my hours of relaxation, wandered in the beautiful woods of Dunmere. It is said, that no one can stand on the summit of Snowdon, and descend less than a fool or a poet. I am sure there is a charm of poesy in Dunmere, for nothing but inspiration could make a boy write rhyme; and I trust the indulgent reader will excuse the vanity which prompts me to print my lines—

and still further—pardon my wandering from the common track, in thus fulfilling a promise of their

DEDICATION

TO

MY FRIEND JOHN LIDDELL,

OF ST. COLUMB.

DUNMERE.

Pleasant it is to wander near
Thy sylvan banks, my loved Dunmere,
When contemplation rules the hour,
With all its pleasing—magic power;
Thy seaward-stream, with stilly sound
Glides slowly to its ocean-bound;
And gently the fond branches lave,
Stooping to greet each passing wave,
Whilst the bright sun's resplendent rays
On the pellucid surface plays,
Reflecting back with *glossy* flame
The shining light from whence it came.
Then heaven is hush'd, and earth is still,
Save when the zephyr o'er yon hill
Comes breathing forth a fresh'ning breeze,
That lingers 'midst the rustling trees;
As if delighted it would dwell
In the romantic, lovely dell—
Hold with the leaves a sportive play,
Then bid farewell and die away.

At such an hour, with some dear friend,
 I love the lonely way to wend,
 To talk of times long—long gone by
 And still remember'd with a sigh :
 Lov'd days ! for then no care opprest
 The grief-void, calm, and cheerful breast;
 Then sorrow only could impart
 A trivial, transitory smart,
 While tears that for a moment flow
 Dashed off the slightly aching wo.

But ah, from all the world set free
 'Tis sweeter, dearer far to me
 A lonely wanderer to stray
 Along the copse-untrodden way,
 Pondering, Bard of Avon, o'er
 Thy wild, wild tale of Ouphen lore,
 So charm'd that thought is apt to view
 Such creatures as thy fancy drew ;
 For 'tis his fairy scenery
 That most befits, my Dunmere, thee ;
 Since in thy woods might fairies sport,
 And hold their wild fantastic court,
 Tripping along with footsteps light
 Over the glades with dewdrops bright,
 Whilst drooping flowers rise to see
 The magic midnight revelry—
 To grace it, cast a brighter bloom,
 And shed a more than morn perfume ;
 While Luna, thro' the foliage peeping,
 Beholding them their vigils keeping,
 Perverts her heaven-encircled way,
 And seemingly invites delay ;
 The laughing elfins leap to see
 Each other tripping blithesomely,
 Yet pay they, with submissive mien,
 Due homage to their silvery Queen,
 Until her rays cannot be seen :
 Then, conscious that the day is near,
 With silent caution disappear—
 Seek their soft beds in loveliest flowers,
 And sleep away the daylight hours.

ELIZA.

Eliza pluckt a budding rose
Where lay a slumb'ring sylph at rest,
Who stirr'd not from his soft repose
Till placed upon her snowy breast;
But who could long be slumbering there?
Did bee e'er sleep on banks of roses?
—It is a place more sweet, more fair
On which this happy sylph reposes—
Arous'd he trembling looks to see
Whence such excess of bliss could be.

Awhile in wonder gaz'd the sprite
On fair Eliza's beauteous face,
And then he view'd with wild delight
His rose-bed's luscious resting place.

* * * * *

Oh it doth give a pleasing charm
 To hearts like mine, with boyhood warm,
 When musing on a woodland song
 Sweet woodland scenes to be among ;
 Or when is told a tale of love,
 In silent bowers and meads to rove ;
 Such as where faithful swains delight
 To meet at eve a lady bright,
 Who comes with throbbing heart I ween,
 Fearing some prying eye hath seen
 Or mark'd her, how she cautiously
 Stole the last cottage window by—
 And when she wished a spirit she
 That could behold, yet hidden be.

'Tis pleasing to the youthful bard
 Honour to meet and fair regard ;
 Mean tho' his powers and weak his lays
 Dear to his soul's the meed of praise ;
 And dear, full dear, that meed would be,
 If merited, it fell on me
 A worthless loon in minstrelsy,
 Who timid ventures to the brink
 Of that inspiring crystal rill,
 Flowing from fam'd Parnassus' hill,
 Of which he fears yet dares to drink ;
 And as the draught he eager drew
 Love o'er the stream in sorrow flew :
 He wept young Harold's fate forlorn,
 Who died a prey to Ellen's scorn !
 He wept—the tears to grief he gave
 Fell sparkling on the flowing wave,
 Like liquid gems on lilies pale
 Bending beneath the morning gale.

* * * * * * * *
 Desponding—lost—the bard appears
 Unweeting he had drunk Love's tears—
 Delights he then in pensive strains
 To tell of love, and lovers' pains.

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Where lay a slumb'ring sylph at rest,
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* * * * *

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ROBERT.

A FRAGMENT.

“ What dangerous action, stood it next to death,
 Would I not undergo for one calm look ?
 O ! 'tis the curse in love, and still approved,
 When women cannot love where they 're belov'd.”

A lowly youth of spotless name,
 Whose every thought aspir'd to fame,
 Dwelt Devon's verdant vales among
 A poor, but ardent child of song.
 He was a strange and wayward youth,
 And ever shunn'd his fellow-men
 As faithless, heartless, void of truth,
 —His soul abhor'd their converse—then
 He'd hie into the silent glen,
 And play his wild harp sweetly there,
 (His harp the balm for ev'ry care)
 Or wander near some silvery stream,
 Bright with the blaze of Cynthia's beam—
 Forget the cold world's bliss and harms,
 And live alone to Nature's charms !

Oh ! who can gaze, with a tearless eye,
 On the beautiful calm of the midnight sky ;
 When the moon in her glory walks forth like a bride,
 Modest and meek in her beauty's pride !
 And the stars move on, in their brightest glow,
 To the music made by the river's flow !

* * * * *

And years had past—and still he roved
 Delighted in the vale he loved ;
 But Sorrow, like a spoiler came,
 And nearly crush'd his soul of flame.
 His mother died—the tend'rest mother
 That ever blest a doting child ;—
 The sun ne'er shone upon another
 So kind of heart—so good—so mild !
 And then he felt alone on earth—
 As reckless—and of little worth !
 He stood by her grave, and breath'd a prayer,
 That he might rest forever there :—
 And he wept those bitter tears, that start
 From the inmost core of a breaking heart ;

When flies through the veins the raging blood,
 Burning and fierce like a lava flood ;
 Before that appalling calm comes on
 When the tempest of sorrow is past and gone.

* * * * *

Years roll'd away—and with them fled
 Th' intensesness of grief for the honor'd dead ;
 And again he sought the wild wood's shade—
 The “babbling brook”—and the sunny glade ;—
 And again his loved harp, long unstrung,
 Thrilled to the lays its master sung.

But soon this transient bliss was over,
 Like the lightning's gleam on the dark heaving waters ;
 He sighs, alas ! a hopeless lover,
 For the brightest and fairest of Albion's daughters !
 She came before him, she proved his ruth
 In the blaze of her beauty—the glow of her youth !
 But he blamed not her—for he could not control
 The love or the hate of the chainless soul !
 But he curs'd that cause, which in evil hour
 Compelled his heart of pride to cower,
 And doom'd him in this world of care
 Misfortune's denizen and heir.

* * * * *

He lov'd—despair'd—implor'd—was slighted—
 Saw *all* his earthly prospects blighted !
 The tearless eye—the pallid check—
 The lips that mov'd—yet not to speak ;
 The languid frame gave fearful token
 The heart within was sear'd or broken !
 Then to his cot and peaceful dell
 He breath'd a last and wild farewell—
 Kiss'd the last rock he pressed upon the strand,
 And died unpitied in a foreign land.

But ere this scene the Bard should tell
 He stood upon the sea-girt shore—
 Upon the shore he loved so well
 He touch'd his harp—once more—once more :
 He wept—its tones to memory brought
 Of by-gone days a fleeting thought ;
 “Once more,” he cried, “and then we sever,
 Child of my love—my pride—forever !”

THE BARD'S LAST LAY.

Once more—once more—my Harp,
 Thy master's fingers o'er thy strings shall stray,
 Before I leave thee, Harp,
 And take across the deep my lonely way ;
 I'd bear thee with me, Harp,
 My sole companion on the rolling wave—
 Bear thee through life, my Harp,
 And make thee partner of my lowly grave.

But oh ! this may not be—
 In vain thy fond chords swell to meet my touch—
 We must be sundered now
 My pride—my bliss—my lov'd—perhaps too much !
 I soon shall be at peace ;
 And then my spirit, freed from Misery's thrall,
 Shall breathe upon thee, Harp,
 And thou shalt sigh a requiem to my soul !

My tears are on thee.—Now
 Farewell my England—and farewell my love !
 JANE !—thou hast prov'd my curse,
 Yet still I dote upon thee far above
 All sublunary forms :—

* * * * *

No matter :—what avails
 My love—exceeding thy full sum of hate ?
 My bark is on the waters—
 And with it I—submissive to my fate !
 The struggle soon must cease ;—
 I bless thee even though I'm left unblest :—
 Again I bless thee, while
 I seek—ah seek—my everlasting rest.

The assumed name of Dudley gave place to the legitimate Dyer, on appearing in Bodmin, where, from my associations, disguise was useless and unnecessary. Here I first imbibed the mania for public speaking, and here I first experienced the comforts of a temporary theatre ; I repeat comforts ; for strange as it may appear to those who deem splendour essential to happiness, the light-heartedness—the good nature of an actor's life is a stranger to a theatre-royal, and in fact, is found only in a barn. The struggle for fame and fortune vitiates men's hearts and minds, and where the prize is great, it is natural the evil passions should be more strongly excited, as is the case in large theatres ; but in a barn the prize is scarcely worth struggling for, and men are more amicable, because they are less ambitious.

The Theatre-*Rural*, Bodmin, stood in Back-lane, and when the players were gone was converted to a stable. The dressing-rooms *were* in the hay-loft. On the second season we had better accommodations in a pig-stye, but of which I did not avail, as a chandler-friend allowed me to dress in his *melting-shop*—no bad proof, as the actors said, of my love for *fat*. Our stage had little depth, and less breadth, while the room behind the scenes was proportionably less ; and I remember that in Falstaff, Manager Dawson was obliged to unpad, as, with his artificial corpulence, he could not pass between the wings and the wall ;—and, that subsequently, on a fat lady's joining the company, she had certainly received her discharge had she been one hair's breadth stouter, for moving the wings nearer each other

would have "cabined, cribbed, confined" us, beyond endurance—and to knock down the walls was thought too expensive.

Our next move brought us to Penzance, familiar to actors as the reputed residence of Job Thornberry; and although it is attempted to point out his house, and the house of Sir Simon Rochdale; the honest brazier, Muckslush Heath, and the Red Cow, are only localized in the author's brain. Never can I forget the truly Thespian mode of journeying to the west. As an especial fayour, Manager Dawson invited me to join his family party, and for the sake of saving and novelty I consented. We started in a wagon, the back part of which received the extensive scenery, machinery, dresses, decorations, &c. of the erratic company, and on the whole lay the inebriated body of Mr. ——, and the huge carcass of Triton, a mixed Newfoundland dog, and a favoured part of the Manager's establishment. In front sat Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, senior, the latter with Phyllis, a little, fat to repletion, goggle-eyed lap-dog, in her lap; next to them were seated Mr. and Mrs. James Dawson, and their infant son; Mrs. Miss, and Miss Sally Scholey, sat next; and in the back-ground, I jolted on; and this load of sin and scenery was drawn by a pair of half-starved horses; but though our progress was *slow*, it amused me much. We had a plentiful supply of provisions—the past season put money into all our pockets—the manager was facetious, and, with an eye to business, examined every barn we passed, and descanted on its convertible capabilities,

should he ever be tempted to open a theatre there ; and thus, though Triton growled, Phillis snarled, and the juvenile Dawson squalled, we finished our journey in perfect good humour. Penzance is endeared to me, from the circumstance of the first meeting with my wife. Both natives of Plymouth, it was strange we should be unknown to each other, and still more strange, that similar events should have brought us on the stage. She came a mere novice to Dawson, and made her first appearance as Rosina, I, being the Belville of the night. My acting at Penzance did not give general satisfaction, inasmuch as a critic took exception to my style, and made a violent anonymous attack on me in the pages of the Dramatic Magazine. I have not the number to refer to, in which his remarks have a place, but they had a withering influence on my spirits, and almost determined me on leaving the stage. He abused my personal and mental pretensions—compared my head to a mop—my mouth to a vast cavern—ridiculed my attempts at elegance in Corinthian Tom—and insisted that Nature designed me for an *Irish Watchman* ! This is the retributive justice to which I alluded in an early page of my book ; for the covert sarcasm heaped by me on a meritorious actor was now returned on my head a thousand-fold in low scurrility and undeserved abuse. I could not be silent under the blow, and I therefore addressed the following letter to the editor of the drama, which he inserted in the forthcoming number, subjoining, however, a continued attack of my friend Sam Sam's Son, some part of which he suppressed on account of its decided illiberality.

“ Mr. Drain,

“ The malicious attack made on me, by your correspondent, SAM, SAM’S SON, discovers such a want of *impartial* and *manly* feeling, that, in justice to myself I cannot pass it over, without an attempt, at least, to counteract its pernicious tendency.

“ My theatrical career has been but short, ’tis true, but during that time I call my brother performers to witness, that, as a *private individual*, I have ever conducted myself with a proper and becoming dignity ; and the *world* will bear me out in the assertion, (that, spite of individual envy and calumny,) I have been, and am still, a favourite with the public. Hitherto my success has been equal to my own, and the warmest wishes of my dearest friends. Your correspondent, S. S. S. being the FIRST to aim a deadly blow at my fame,—a blow, which, by disseminating its poison in the pages of your widely-circulated work, may, eventually, crush forever all my hopes, unless, with a generosity for which you are celebrated, through the same medium you suffer me to prove the **FALSITY**, and consequent **MALICE** of S. S. S.’s. criticism : to do this, I must enter on a brief detail of **my theatrical life**.

“ Previous to the spring of 1822, I had obtained considerable applause as an *amateur* ; at that period an old friend, Mr. BUTLER, then belonging to Mr. J. DAWSON’s company, requested me to make a *début* for his benefit ; I consented, and selected *Hotspur* for my opening part. To return some marked attention shown me by Mr. WILTON on Mr. BUTLER’s night, I agreed to appear a second, and, as I fully purposed, the *last time* for his benefit, as *Wallace* in WALKER’S tragedy. On this and the subsequent occasion my success was so brilliant, Mr. J. DAWSON immediately offered me an engagement for his *first business*, and, after a consultation with my friends, to satisfy my passion for notoriety, it was resolved I should embrace the profession.

“ In *May*, 1822, I made my first bow as an actor at *Dartmouth*, and during a two-months’ season, constantly sustained the most arduous characters in the Drama, *entirely to the satisfaction of my manager*, Mr. J. DAWSON, and equally to that of the audience, if the applause of an audience is a fair criterion.

“ My success at *Bodmin* (our next town) I will not notice ; I was surrounded by friends who were more *desirous* of *applauding* than condemning me : but, of my success at *Penzance*, the town where S. S. S. would immolate me to his spleen, I thus **PUBLICLY BOAST**. I entered this town under peculiar disadvantages ; a mere novice, a *total stranger* to the inhabitants, I had to appear in characters, which Mr. OSBALDISTON (now leading in the *Norwich* company), a fine actor, and a tried and deserving

months before, with a success commensurate to his abilities; and yet I was not only *tolerated* (the summit then of my ambition), but *caressed* and *applauded*, and the kindness of the Penzance public will ever be cherished with gratitude by me amongst the dearest and proudest of my recollections.

“I am now returned within a short distance of my native town, and sustain the first business at the *Dock Theatre*, where many of the *first public characters* have gone before me. Here I might be expected to fail; but the applause of the audience and the *public prints* give testimony that I am neither the wretch in *figure* or *ability* that S. S. S. represents me. This is a brief but *true*, though *unavoidably egotistical* recital of my *nine months Thespian campaign*; and now referring you to the *Plymouth and Dock Journal*, (1) and the *Alfred*, and *Devonshire Freeholder*, papers, for a description of my *acting* and *person*; and informing you, that I am *AUTHORIZED* by Mr. J. DAWSON, in saying, *he has refused engagements to many old and celebrated staggers*, because he is *fully satisfied with my histrionic talent*, I appeal to your judgment to redress my wrongs on my *calumniator*, S. S. S. Were I the monster in *mind* and *body* that he describes me, is it probable that Mr. DAWSON would engage, or the public endure me? Should I not be hooted from the stage? Would any of my professional associates cheer me with the kind breath of their applause? Yet, to give “*the loud lie*” to S. S. S.’s statement, I am engaged and endured, receive most flattering testimonials of public approbation, and my “*brother actors*,” though they *occasionally condemn, more frequently applaud*.

“In the hope that I have said sufficient to convince you that S. S. S.’s attack is at once invidious and unjust, I throw myself on your kindness to do me justice with the world. Who this would-be *dictator* of public taste may be I know not. To the *name of gentleman* he has forfeited *ALL* claims by his *scurrility*! a *man AT HEART* he cannot be! for what *MAN* would, under the impenetrable veil of anonymous criticism, attempt the destruction of one who never wronged him?

“With respect,

“I am, Mr. Drama,

“Plymouth, 74, Whimple-Street,
“Feb. 22, 1823.

“Your obedient servant,
“ROBERT DYER.”

(1) “This paper, speaking of *Rob Roy*, says, “*Mr. DYER’s fine figure appeared to advantage as the ‘Red Robber,’ and his feeling acting in the third act was most rapturously applauded; he is decidedly a favourite with the audience.*”

My first season in Devonport proved a complete triumph. The audience in this town applauded my inaugural essay with professional men as my supporters. Now they looked on me as their own, and perhaps no actor of a twelve-months' standing ever received more applause, while my attachment to the little theatre was proportioned to the kindness I experienced within its walls. Here, for the first and only time, I played with Mrs. Davison and Mrs. Bunn, both eminent ; but the palm of superiority fell to the fair daughter of Thalia. During her stay with us she appeared much depressed, but at night the gloom passed away, and her talent and beauty were alike dazzling. Her Juliana has never been equalled—she herself has never been excelled—and it is a lasting stigma on the public, that she is sacrificed to the desire for novelties.—In all grades of society, save the professional, a length of servitude is a virtue, but with actors “service is no inheritance,” because they may outlive reputation. Such is the case with Mrs. Davison. The lustre of her ability is undimmed, but, like Macbeth, the million are “a weary of the sun,” and this legitimate daughter of the Comic Muse is unable to obtain an engagement. Mrs. Bunn is also in obscurity, but from a different cause. Her genius had been cultivated by her husband, and that, aided by a majestic voice and manner, made her a truly fascinating actress. Her Elvira, Alicia, and Elizabeth (in Kenilworth) were extremely good, yet instruction was apparent in all she did. Bunn condescended to give me directions in Leicester ; but I had a distaste for his character, and I did not like the motive of Sir Giles Overreach

to "learn any thing and of any creature to make thee great, yea, of the devil himself." The injudicious advice of my friends induced me to take a benefit in the Plymouth Theatre, thus giving a direct slight to my Devonport patrons, which they punished by generously forgiving—but the speculation failed, notwithstanding my entertainment was patronized by the worthy chief magistrate, W. A. Welsford, Esq. and the only pleasure or profit I derived from the attempt was the subjoined letter from my excellent friend Lieut. ——, R.N. of whom previously I had received many tokens of regard, and for whom, in connexion with his amiable lady, I have the highest esteem. Many happy hours have I passed with them in "the flow of reason" and the sweet voice of song.

"Plymouth, 18th April.

"Dear Dyer,

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you to day to congratulate you on your very successful efforts of last evening. Mrs. L. and myself, besides the echo of many good theatrical judges, pronounce you to be a very *promising* candidate for future excellence. You had a very powerful *part* to sustain, and we could have wished that there had been rather a greater variation of character between the play and the entertainment, which *would, perhaps*, have pleased those that are partial to you, and moreover given you some degree of repose, for you *worked* hard for *fame*, and you were not disappointed. But when you sit by my fireside we will talk more about it, and Mrs. L. will couple her eulogy with mine. I rejoice to see you are so attentive to *your author*, which is the *first* and leading proof of *ability*. Your figure is *good*, and your *ease* and *grace* pleasing, and likely to secure you *importance*. Go on my *boy*, and keep the great master of the passions before you—*Garrick*. You are now in a train for a *higher sphere*; and may you attain that *pinnacle* is the sincere and cordial wish of your very faithful friend.

S E C O N D Y E A R.

Surely, Sir,
There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE second probationary year began in the stable of the King's Arms, Launceston, which, having undergone sundry alterations, was yclept a theatre, and surely such a theatre never before had existence ; its breadth (the stage) might have been *eight* feet, its depth the same—its height not more than six feet five inches ; for on our opening night, the nodding plumes I wore in Aranza, absolutely were hid in the *flies*. The entrance behind the scenes passed over a large granite water trough, and through a window about one yard square. The gentlemen had access to their dressing-room by a common ladder, which offered such insurmountable difficulties to

on the stage, and out of this arrangement arose a ludicrous circumstance. Every thing was conducted with the strictest regard to economy, and the duties of prompter, scene-shifter, property-man, and candle-snuffer, were alternately performed by Mr. Dawson, senior, and Mr. James Dawson. I have seen the former speak the tag of a piece, in the corner of the stage, whilst with one hand off the stage he rang the bell, and lowered the curtain, when the play had ended. James rang the bell, and raised the curtain, before going on for a song, and if he did not obey an encore, the trouble of raising the curtain again alone prevented him. Manager Dawson always wore *black inexpressibles* for tragedy, and *white ditto* for comedy. Once, having finished a tale of wo in the play, he prepared for fun in the farce, by shifting from black to white, and he stood very leisurely on the stage with his back to the audience. James, being in a hurry to begin the farce, without perceiving his father, rang, and at once pulled up the curtain, and the first intimation of the exposure given him was his queer shadow thrown by the foot-lights on the scene, and the loud shouts of the surprized audience. "Damn it Jem! what are you at?"—cried the worthy old man, as he snatched up his tragedy appendages, and hopped off with his comedy trappings hanging about his heels! Though on the whole an excellent temper, Manager Dawson occasionally was very irritable. Once, when playing Hecate, the leader of the orchestra, by some means, offended him so much, that he belaboured the poor fiddler with his broom, until one birch in the bunch could not call another fellow; and when a critic in a crowded

gallery expressed his contempt of Dawson's acting, by throwing an apple at him, Dawson deliberately took up the forbidden fruit, and returned it with such force among the assembled gods, that he knocked out the eye of an unoffending man ! The business in Launceston was worse than bad, yet the disgust attending empty benches was lessened to me by the attention I received from those *bon-vivants* who give life to the otherwise dull town. The "world's wo" must be indeed heavy, which the society of such men could fail to dispel. One Anacreontic day we passed amidst the beauties of Werrington Park, and perhaps we relished our rich viands the more, knowing that *uncle paid for all.* (10) The next night we played the *School for Scandal*, by desire and under the patronage of the Mayor and Corporation ; and the instant I was discovered as Charles, a good friend, himself "heavy and heated from his last night's wine," cried aloud "**Dyer, you dog, you are drunk !**" Although my head was quite clear, the charge gained credit, and on the following day many of my fair friends rated me soundly for *shameful conduct*. Bidding adieu to the convivials of Launceston, we visited my loved Bodmin again, and I was happy in the society of my oldest and dearest friends. Nothing of professional consequence here transpired, and in due time we peregrinated to Liskeard, the town in which my earliest histrionic efforts were displayed ; and although full fifteen years had passed since then, all my acquaintance felt delighted in the confirmation of the by-gone prediction, that "**Robert Dyer will be a Player.**" The season, I believe, was good, at least

my benefit was productive, and actors generally estimate a manager's success by their own.

During our stay in Liskeard, the notorious Rowland Stephenson passed through the town on an electioneering excursion, and he answered the application of a stranger to him for support on her benefit night, with a profuse liberality of £4. ! I mention this, merely to bear out an assertion, that the most *profitable* supporters of the theatre are men of desperate fortunes ; far be it from me to deny that the noble and the virtuous are generous patrons of the drama, for my individual experience proves the contrary ; but I do maintain they are so few, that the theatre must inevitably fall, if the support of the ignoble and the vicious did not preponderate as one hundred to one. In the summer of 1832 I passed a pleasant day at Clovelly, in the very house were Stephenson and Lloyd lay *incog.* previous to their escape to America. I also saw the fishing boat, in which, after putting back *twice*, through stress of weather, on the *third* attempt they succeeded in getting on board a vessel in the Bristol channel. Only to a fate could they owe their good fortune ; but one newspaper, containing an account of the fugitives, and offering £1000 reward for their apprehension, came to Clovelly, and that at once fell into their hands, and was of course destroyed. Not one hour after their final departure, several papers arrived, describing their persons so minutely that no doubt could be entertained of their identity ; and though all the vessels in the cove started in pursuit, the golden prize escaped.

Leaving Liskeard, we next proceeded to levy contributions on the taste and pockets of the good people of Redruth ; and can I ever forget the theatre ? It was a spacious loft erected over an eight-stalled stable, two of which were apportioned as dressing-rooms for the company, and we had access to the stage by a common step-ladder, through a trap-door. Every motion, every neigh, was heard ; and though the tent scene of Richard was made more illusive by the actual sound, when Richard said “steed threatens steed with high and boastful neighings ;” and *Irene* in *Blue-beard*, could, by a simple transposition of *hear*, for *see*, with great truth sing

“ I *hear* them galloping,
So fast they are galloping,
I *hear* them galloping,
They are nearly at the door ;”

yet some confounding interruptions occasionally disturbed our solemnities. Once, especially, I suffered great annoyance in the part of Wallace, from a noisy ostler, and a restive horse. In the scene with Monteith I had wrought myself up to a high pitch of excitement, and had pronounced “ I still am Wallace,” with an energy I thought sufficient to annihilate Monteith, and impress my audience with an awful reverence for my powers ; but instead of applause, a loud shout of laughter followed my exclamation, which, construing into an insult, on the part of the audience, I returned by looking unutterable things at the senseless multitude ; but I joined most heartily in the laugh against myself when I heard the cause of mirth. The ostler was cleaning a refractory horse, and just as I

said “ I still am Wallace,” he cried out in a petulant and audible tone “ Whist stand up, you nasty devil?” There is a fatality of good or evil attending some particular characters, and in my list I may reckon Wallace and Gambia—the last I never played without a day or two previously taking a violent cold ; and the first either gratified me by being highly attractive as a benefit play, or else distressed me by some untoward circumstance during its representation. In this character I nearly strangled a stage-keeper, whose drunken ignorance came across me, just when my courage was wrought up to the sticking place ; and the whizzing of a bottle of *ginger pop* sent me indignantly off the stage. Seymour, the stage-manager, at Worcester, was on the scene with me, at a time when some jovial fellows in the pit attempted to open a bottle of ginger beer without disturbing us, or the audience. Our energies were somewhat damped by hearing a suppressed titter, and whizzing accompaniment, with a distinct whisper of “ It’s coming.” I very hastily passed over my scene, and left Seymour on the stage, when the whizzing increased, and a voice said “ Now !” which Seymour thought a signal for disapprobation against him ; and stepping forward, to the amazement of the public, he said “ Why do you hiss me, ladies and gentlemen ? I have served you to the best of my ability, and it grieves me that my efforts should end in ——” at this moment the cork, impatient of coaxing, flew up with a loud explosion, and Seymour’s speech ended in “ Pop.”

Having finished at Redruth, we returned to Devonport for my last season. The study and practice of nearly

two years had wonderfully improved my style, and my friends anticipated a splendid termination to my Thespian career. Flattered and applauded by all, I bore with an ill grace the engagement of Manager Dawson's son-in-law, Osbaldiston, now Manager of the Surrey theatre, then “a *damned* with faint praise” actor from Bath; but he did me good by comparison, for the town awarded me the laurel, and he left empty benches at Devonport, under the plea of his services being required at Bath. Amongst the novelties of the season, the appearance of Young, a corporal in the 3rd Guards, was the most striking. This man possessed a fine figure, and by that alone obtained a certain degree of popularity with the officers of his regiment; and perhaps, from their recommendation, he was honoured by the immediate patronage of the Earl and Countess Harcourt. Her Ladyship attended his performance of *Zanga*, and expressed her satisfaction by a handsome pecuniary present, and the gift of a beautiful topaz ring; and eventually she procured his discharge, and then a situation in the excise. However, he was unworthy her notice—he forfeited his situation—again enlisted in the army--and at last died in the West Indies. For some time a sort of dissent had sprung up between the manager and myself. Dawson, I imagine, thought to lower my soaring spirit by foisting secondary characters on me; and I consented to receive his 15s. per week, only that I might play the first and best of every thing. At last “Pride shall have a Fall,” was put up for the benefit of one of the actors, and I was cast *Lorenzo*, which I refused to play, conceiving

Toronto to be my undoubted right. My refusal incensed Dawson—some angry words passed between us—and I threw up my engagement, and quitted the managerial authority of Manager Dawson forever. Afterwards I played for my wife's benefit; and at a later period, STARRED it at Falmouth for Adolphus Dawson's benefit; but I never again called my first manager "master."

On leaving the theatre thus abruptly, my situation was one of extreme delicacy. My dear little woman was near her confinement with her first child—my friends were in dudgeon with me, because I had not married "*a fortune*"—I had not one spare shilling in my pocket—and thus circumstanced, I had no alternative but to suffer her to stay with Dawson to the close of the season, and exist on her 15s. per week. A provision for the future harassed me; but that protecting Providence, whose mercy has been my help in many, many a time of need, sent me succour even in the eleventh hour. I had returned from a solitary ramble when I found this letter:—

" My dear Bob,

" I know not how your coolness with your family may affect your finances, but I know that marriage is chargeable, therefore oblige me by using the enclosed, until better times enable you to repay me.

" Yours, ever truly,

" JOHN LEE STEVENS."

The enclosure was a £5. note! Excellent friend. This debt is cancelled in all but a sense of obligation, as sincere and lasting as the anxiety from which his assistance relieved me was heartfelt. And here I would

digress a little to pay a just tribute of admiration to the genius of my friend ; but I am engaged upon a work, exclusively devoted to native talent, in which ample justice shall be done him ; and therefore, for the present, I must be content with this brief record of my regard.

The season having finished, and Dawson started for Truro, leaving Mrs. Dyer “our fortnight-old first-born,” and myself, minus her 15s. weekly salary, my necessities obliged me to get up an amateur benefit play, which, under the patronage of the Honourable Capt. Stopford, of the 3rd Guards, proved tolerably successful. My play was Bertram, my farce the Review ; and thanks to the exertions of all engaged, the entertainment gave unbounded satisfaction. In Bertram, I was ably assisted by Miss Huddart, who accepted my retaining fee of £4. and expenses, and came from Teignmouth expressly for the occasion. In my estimation she was, and is, the best actress of the day, that is, as far as sound sense, a correct conception of character, and beauty of person be associated in forming a good actress. But Nature, the niggard Nature, which never yet made perfection, has given her a voice with indistinctness of utterance, that alone has been a bar to her established eminence. In Plymouth she enjoyed a high reputation, perhaps not a little increased by her exemplary conduct as a daughter. Her father had been an actor of celebrity, and his performance of Othello, in London, was marked with the dubious circumstance, that at his death the curtain fell to a dead silence—the voice of approbation or the cry of disapprobation being alike unheard. Poor Huddart, he

died as he lived—*on the stage*; for on a journey from Birmingham to Plymouth, between Worcester and Bristol, he made his *exit* from the bustling scene of life.

I cannot part from my first associates, without noticing an intended satirical publication on the merits of the Devonport company. Though there was much smartness in it, and a flattering compliment to my better half, and myself, I advised its suppression because of the leading tone, which threatened a severe lash on the demerits of my brother actors; and the “biting gall” of Sam Sam’s Son taught me sympathy for the feelings of others. The work, then, was suppressed; but as there exist no reasons now why it should be withheld, I beg to present it to my readers, as a finish to the second year of my theatrical life.

“FROM TOM IN DEVONPORT,
TO TOM IN TOWN.

“I promised, (and when did I ever break faith?)
To tell you the news of the Thespian world, here,
The present and past—the good and the scath—
Whatever has been—and what now doth appear.
So I sit me down now, waving all meaner things,
Of Tragedy Queens, and Tragedy Kings,
Of Comedy-women, and Comedy-men, Sir,
Though a strict, yet, believe me, an impartial censor.
My gallantry yet is not open to stricture,
So the ladies shall have the first place in my picture.

Suppose me a showman—the first that appears.
Is Miss S——, a vet’ran in practice and years,
A woman of sense, of judgment, and taste,
Whose acting is ever delightfully chaste.

You may watch through a night, and ne’er make a halt
In her *acting* or *readings*, to point out a fault ;
You may talk of the beauty of figure and face,
Of youthful appearance, the jargon of grace ;
But when beauty is only the mask for stupidity,
To say *this* is perfection is arrant cupidity :
But there are in this town a set of poor fools,
The Manager’s parasites, echoes, and tools,
Pseudo-critics—who give to vile trash an “*encore*,”
And these in their wisdom say “ S——’s —— a bore ; ”
But for me (and you know that my taste is correct)
Miss S—— doth ever command my respect :
And spite of detraction and Envy’s cold sneer,
She stands proudly aloft without a compeer.

For the next, O——— is that lady’s name,
You may judge by her face that her acting is tame !
Notwithstanding all this, being the Manager’s daughter,
She’s cried up as a gem of the very first water.
But remember the adage, (to *vanity* bitters)
Remember it well, “ ‘tisn’t all gold that glitters ; ”
She’s like a fine nut that is *minus* the kernel,
My simile means that her charms are external ;
For she plays all alike in a style so pathetic }
The Tragic, the Comic, the Melo-dramatic, }
Pantomimic, Terpsichoric, and Operatic : }
She would very soon lose all her fame in this place,
But she’s bolstered by power and “ her pretty face ; ”
She may play in such parts as Clari—Annette—
Poor Phœbe—some breeches parts—gentle Fanchette—
Without giving offence; but oh, close the scene,
When she tries *Violante*, and wronged *Imogene* ;
For all then is soul-less, insipid, and crude,
Like her Portia (a dowdy)—Miss Hardy (a prude).
I spare further comment—the next ’tis confess,
That *she*’s the top-bird of the family nest.

Mrs. C——, a woman of spirit—the dandy,
No more like her sister than water’s to brandy ;
I can scarcely conceive they are both from the same stock ;
But their mother is prudent—her, I will not for shame shock ;

But suppose they were twins, and she true to her duty ;
 But Jane *stole* the wit—and Hal *has* the beauty.
 I cannot describe the power of this woman,
 Could you see her she'd soon set you all in a glow man.
 I've sighed with her—wept with her—laughed with her—clapt her
 Crying “ Ditto to excellent all through the chapter.”
 Da capo, dear Quiz, 'bout the Manager's daughter,
 For she *is* a gem of the very first water. (11)

The next, Mrs. D——, in old woman passable,
 That Mrs. J. D——, who is never irascible ;
 She's like a divinity, with aspect of sorrow,
 The same to day—yesterday—and also to-morrow.
 That's Miss C——, who always looks, as she looks now,
 As much as to say—“ I am—I am—how ? ”
 Mrs. D——, the last of the ladies now view,
 She does as well as she can, having nothing to do :
 She plays what she does play, with charming naiveté,
 Is recently married—sings sweetly—is pretty :
 And think me not partial, when thus in her praise,
 I say she's a lark amongst magpies and jays.

The ladies reviewed—weigh their merits—and then
 Say, who'll kick the beam, the women or men ?
 For myself, having studied the *pros* and the *cons*,
 I think the dear creatures must yield to the *Dons* ;
 For though S—— has judgment, and C—— has fire,
 The per contras in favor of C—— and D—— :
 Whilst J. D——, his father a worthy old hearty,
 Make the men, as I say, the best part of the party.”

* * * * *

THIRD YEAR

“O, there be players, that I have seen play,
speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent
nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so
bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's jo
made men, and not made them well, they imitated
abominably.”

SHAK

My third year commenced with my engagement to Mr. Brunton, than whom, a better actor, or a more skilful manager, does not exist; and he is another instance of neglected talent. For many years he occupied a spicuous station on the London Boards; the influence of his sister, the Countess of Blessington, helped him not a little, he undoubtedly owed his success chiefly to his merits. But the love of novelty, which is the characteristic of the Metropolis, and after a brilliant, and successful career of provincial and minor manager, he *starred* it through the country with the

encased spiral wire imitation of the terrific serpent of Ceylon, by Mr. Vipond, artist of the King's theatre. In one of his peregrinations we first met in the Plymouth theatre, of which, subsequently, he became manager, and where I received from him that forbearing attention, which, at last, opened a road for me to fame, and almost fortune. He became manager of the Exeter and Plymouth circuit, and my application for a situation, backed by the recommendation of my amiable friend Miss Hud-dart, was successful; for Mrs. Dyer and myself were engaged on a salary of £3. per week, an increase of 100 per cent. on Manager Dawson's pittance. An advance of salary is quite an epoch in an actor's life. He dates every event from the time, when, with a heavier purse, but a lighter heart, he strutted out from the treasury. Beside, it is the standard of popularity; for if he be asked "Where you a favourite at ———?" the reply is, "Oh yes! I received £3. per week, the highest salary in the company!" With me, however, money was not a consideration, for if I played with applause, it was a matter of indifference whether "the ghost" (13) walked on Saturday or not. Teignmouth witnessed my *début* with Brunton; and it was so very unfavourable that he said "I am afraid our Othello is no go." But I had made some progress in his good opinion notwithstanding, for he upheld me against the condemnatory judgment of a distinguished nobleman, who afterwards became my most liberal, and honoured patron.

On joining a new company there is so much to encounter on the score of jealousy and prejudice, that

an unusual degree of nerve can alone support a sensitive man, through the ordeal of the first month's rehearsals. Actors are more to be dreaded than an audience ; they crowd the wings with a sneering pertinacity, eager to laugh at the failings of the *new actor*, or to maintain their assumed superiority in experience or opinion, if a new reading or new business be proposed. The most accomplished gentleman and actor on the stage told me, that he suffered the torture of the damned on his first rehearsals in London. Men of established reputation, whose very eminence might be thought to generate a consideration for the emanations of genius, treated him with such cool, but cautious contempt, he has gone from the theatre so painfully depressed, that the solitude of his chamber, and the oblivion of sleep alone, could bring his mind to a proper tone for the night's exertion. Such is the fact in Drury-lane, and such it is in a barn. A poor fellow, assailed on all sides by his good-natured friends, once said "Thank you—thank you—good nature in the pit, and the lady at the stage door not excepted!" And now "good nature in the pit, and the lady at the stage door" are by-words. I found them both at Teignmouth, but the little intrigues and jealousies of certain parties annoyed me most. I wished to open in Bertram, but Bertram was reported to be my *chef d'œuvre*, therefore no one would study the Prior : and as punctual payments did not warrant managerial authority, I was forced to open in *Othello*, because Iago had some chance of beating me out of the field. Subsequently I played Captain Falkner, in the " Way to

get Married ;" and finally, at Teignmouth, Joseph Surface, to the Lady Teazle of Mrs. Yates.

On the 3rd of September we opened the Plymouth theatre ; and though Mrs. Yates had, doubtless, played with an older and more experienced, a more zealous company she could not. The cast of the play stood thus :—Sir Peter Teazle, Mr. S. Bennett—Sir Oliver Surface, Jones—Charles Surface, Brunton—Joseph Surface, Dyer—Sir Benjamin Backbite, Stuart—Crabtree, Wilton—Lady Teazle, Mrs. Yates. The play was well acted, and the Plymouth Journal spoke of us in flattering terms. (14) Yet, newspaper criticisms are by no means to be depended on, *party spirit* frequently decrying the good, and upholding the bad ; and interest forbidding the condemnation of a man, on whose will the insertion of an advertisement depends. The editor of a provincial paper can rarely venture an independant opinion ; and I know several editors who refuse all theatrical remarks, because the manager makes the insertion of his advertisements conditional on their silence as to the merit of his company.

Returning to my observations on the Plymouth company, I must speak of it as the most talented I ever played with, and I think I shall be read with indulgence, if I dwell on the beauty of the fair partners of my fame. Of Mrs. Yates I cannot fairly speak as one of us, for she shone the brilliant star of our hemisphere only for three nights, and then returned to her London engagements. But as we met no more on the mimic scene, I must take this as the most fit, and

only opportunity, to express my admiration of her abilities. I have already mentioned Miss Huddart; (15) she undoubtedly held the first place as a woman of genius; but for the palm of beauty she had a successful rival in Miss Kimble, a creature "framed for the tender offices of love;" and certainly two handsomer women never before, or since, met under the roof of the same theatre. Next to the "Rival Queens" the little syren, Miss Holdaway, held her rank; a sweet and scientific singer, who left us for the Liverpool circuit, where she became an immense favourite, and married a Mr. Raymond. Mrs. S. Bennett had a voice of superior power; to my thinking, superior even to the best reputed vocalists of the day. But her personal charms were not first rate; and notwithstanding she appeared with great success in London, her want of beauty doomed her again to the provinces, and she died in Jersey, in comparative obscurity. Mrs. Frederick, a fine remains "of beauty once admired," was our old woman. And the prettiness of Mrs. Dyer harmonized with the whole of female loveliness, for which our ladies were so justly celebrated.

Gladly would I pay an individual tribute to the merits of my brother actors, S. Bennett, Stuart, Gardner, Williamson, &c. but, with the exception of poor James Wilton, "who sleeps the sleep of those that dream not," they all are toiling in the path of fame, and eulogy from me would be superfluous. Wilton was a hard, but sensible actor; in some things truly excellent; and in all things good. But his littleness unaccountably made against him. There are many much less in stature than he, who

yet appeared giants by his side ; and while he strengthened the general axiom, that "mind gives dignity to the man,"—for he had a six-foot intellect,—yet he always appeared *under* a five-foot figure. Our season proceeded prosperously, though I wanted opportunity to distinguish myself, until the removal of Brunton, and the production of *Der Freischutz* brought me constantly, and in force, before the public. Managers will play the best parts ; and when talent is backed by maturity and unimpaired powers, authority may have its way unquestioned. So it was with Brunton ; his love of acting kept me in the back ground ; but I acknowledged his superiority, and returned his polite attention by cheerfully playing whatever was entrusted to me. The objections of a noble lord, and the *good nature* of others, could not fail to bias him against me ; yet he upheld me until my personation of Bertram (16) confirmed-him in his favourable judgment. At last, compelled by the strong arm of the law, my good friend left the field entirely open to me ; and the German devilries of *Der Freischutz* raised me to the topmost pinnacle of Fame. Never was a piece produced with greater care and effect, than this melo-drama ; and its success fully repaid the exertions of all concerned. Mine was triumphant success ; and a loud call was raised for my appearance at the end of the play. Out of this circumstance arose a ludicrous mistake. *Dyer* and *Fire*, are similar in sound ; and when my admirers cried *Dyer*, several persons became dreadfully apprehensive of *Fire* ; and one elderly lady betrayed such violent agitation, that to quiet her a friend of mine shouted aloud, from his

place in the boxes, “ It’s false, madam, it’s false ! there is not a spark of *fire* in the house.” This was rather a reflection on our efforts, but false even in fact, for squibs, crackers, serpents, red fire and blue, had made our final scene a very Pandemonium. Shakspeare says “ What’s in a name ?” He never perhaps heard of one that rhymed with “ fire.” The *Freischutz* made a great sensation in Plymouth and the neighbourhood—all the world followed it—notwithstanding its presumptuous horrors were said by the million to have raised the fearful tempest which desolated our coast in the month of November ! The company not being entirely operatic, Mr. R. Brunton, on whom the management devolved when his father left, very judiciously brought forward the drama, with a popular selection of airs and chorusses from Von Weber’s opera ; and this was objected at previously to the production of the piece ; but that acute critic, the Rev. Mr. Macaulay, the oracle of the theatrical *élite* of Plymouth, told me that my admirable acting as Rodolph left them nothing to regret at the loss of music.

Amongst other compliments lavished on me, I am not the least proud of the notice taken of my Penruddock, by a grandson of the author. Under the patronage of Lord Boringdon, my benefit reached nearly £120 ; and thus loaded with cash and fame, the season closed with *eclat*, and I immediately went to an engagement at Wolverhampton, with Bennett, the manager of that and the Worcester theatre. There are some men whose touch is Plutus like ; men to whom Fortune is not blind nor fickle ; and Bennett is of the

number, for he stands a living testimony that neither birth, intellect, nor education, are essential to the making a man's fortune. "An honest man's the noblest work of God," and if so, Bennett is a noble fellow, that is, as far as the payment of the lowest fractions of pounds, shillings, and pence, constitutes honesty. I found him a shrewd man, joined in the management with a family of an equal mental calibre, and what is best understood by the term *good luck* with himself. Their connexion commenced in a Welsh sharing scheme, where a public-house-room became their temple of Thespis ; and the price of admission to the nightly sacrifice was *sixpence* the *front*, and *threepence* (or what you can get) for the *back* seats. Every member of the "corps itinerant" felt that a profitable sharing of candle-ends, and receipts, depended on union of purpose ; and therefore, as the stage keeper blended with his office the duties of actor, property-man, and call-boy, the manager thought it but a just participation of labour, that he should deliver the bills in a morning, which announced him as the Duke Aranza and Don Giovanni of the night ; and ended with the startling and acceptable notice, that *he* settled the accounts of the theatre weekly ! By dint of economy, enough was saved to enable them to take the Wolverhampton theatre, when John Crisp (17) retired from the management ; and what the actors call "a hit" in the production of a piece, filled their treasury, and thus established them in the most pleasant circuit in the Kingdom. Bennett is no actor, neither has he the least perception ; for twenty years' practice has not taught him even the mechanism of

his profession ; and yet he is tolerated, because he is "a pretty man." He says and does the most outrageous things ; and once, on a last night, having died as Antoine, he rose up to the symphony, and sang the first verse of " God save the King." Having to perform Orlando to the Rosalind of Miss Foote, and not being certain of the order in which the time questions came, " I prithee, who doth he *trot*, withal ?" " Who *ambles* time, withal ?" " Who doth he *gallop*, withal ?" " Who *stays* it still, withal ?" he chalked T. A. G. S. on the front of his beaver, which, " for his ease," he carried in his hand, and the initial letters made him trot, amble, gallop, and stay, correctly. But his want of acting-talent, as a part of the management, was atoned for by the excelling nature of Miss James, and her brother Cassup, who possessed more native humour than any comedian of my acquaintance ; and he might have risen to celebrity had he not been like the farmer's horse, Genius, " a lazy beast." Her talent was really transcendent ; and unlike her brother, she improved by industry. No matter how short the notice, or what the magnitude of a character, her perseverance and spirit carried her successfully through the task. She never saw a difficulty, for she loved her profession ; and her admirable versatility sustained her with equal effect in all the imaginings of the divine Shakspeare—the only standard by which histrionic merit can be estimated. She died in her youth, beloved by all ; and her virtues and her reputation will live long in the affectionate remembrance of her admirers and friends. Her death completely revolutionized the system

of management. During her existence policy allowed no *female star* in the theatres, and very liberal outlays were made in the production of new pieces : but the fear of rivalry removed, the stars were permitted to shine, and a rich source of emolument opened to the fair dames of the London boards, which before was shut against them.

Bennett had a strange assemblage with him when I first entered his green-room, though Shuter, Minguad, Jones, and Aylmer, (18) Seymour, Miss Stratton, and Mrs. Minguad (formerly Miss Boyce, of Drury-lane) redeemed the remainder from utter contempt. Yet this company, aided by the brilliant scenes of Jones, drew good houses ; and Wightman and Co. were endured, for the same reason that a bad picture is admired by the ignorant in a splendid frame. Wolverhampton witnessed the first appearance of John Kemble with indifference ; and the dulness of the last is entailed on the present generation of play-goers. The smoke of their coal-pits seems to smother their discernment, for they applaud what others censure, and condemn what others praise ; indeed a bad actor is synonymous with a “favourite at Wolverhampton.” My first season in this “iron region,” save that it introduced my family to the notice of the excellent Mrs. and Miss Scott, and the friendship of the amiable Anne S——, in whose regard ten years have made no diminution, passed dully enough. *Gulliver, or the Flying Island*, and the *Amateur of Fashion*, in Macbeth, engrossed attention ; and no regret was felt by the public when we left for Worcester.

FOURTH YEAR.

“— You may say what sights you see ;
I see things too, although you judge I wink.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE fair city of Worcester, even to the native eye, is beautiful as a dream of fairy-land ; and to a stranger, arriving from the fire and smoke of Wolverhampton, the general effect is magical—perhaps more so by contrast. An atmosphere of freshness is around—there is the gentle Severn flowing slowly to the sea, as if loath to leave the fertile vale—and away to the right the Malvern hills, in their rich robe of verdure, gracefully undulate to the blue heavens ; whilst the city in its fair proportion, and minute neatness, gives certain token of the comfort which awaits the visitor. Cleanliness is inseparable from hospitality, and in Worcester they both

abound. To me, the combination of hill and dale—wood and water—fields and flowers—have a thousand charms ; nor can I understand a feeling of indifference to the beauties of nature, particularly in persons, whose minds, it is fair to conclude, must be enriched by the study of the master spirits of poetry. Yet, generally speaking, actors have no taste for fine scenery out of the theatre. I am drawn into this observation, by remembering an anecdote of the eminent Miss O'Neil's apathy. She lodged at Worcester, with a gentleman, whose admiration of his native place was enthusiastic : and one day he persuaded her to a promenade, promising her a splendid view from Rainbow Hill. During the ascent, he repeatedly entreated her not to turn, before he gave the word ; and when they reached the point of view, expecting her, no doubt, to be lost in raptures, he exultingly exclaimed “ Now, madam ! ” She turned, and nearly annihilated my friend, by coolly saying to her brother “ You may tell _____, the manager, I shall not come for less than the £100 ! ” And not a single observation did she make on one of the most beautiful views in the world !

My success at Worcester progressed until the production of *Der Freischutz*, when my reputation took the exalted and proud station, which confirmed me the favourite of the Worcester audience ; an honour which attended me from that time, to the last hour I appeared before them. It is rather singular, that *Der Freischutz* invariably succeeded with my Rodolph ; and either failed entirely, or met with equivocal success, unsupported by my exertions. Bennett found this to his cost, at

Wolverhampton, where a Mr. Kent became his leading tragedian, on my leaving to return to the Plymouth theatre. The season at Worcester gave me a profitable benefit; and thence we went to Leamington, a pleasant watering place for managers and actors to get poor in. For six weeks our best houses did not exceed £5. though the Countess of Dysart, and the club-houses, descended to patronize us; and on one occasion, a young Oxonian illuminated our darkness by playing Beverley for his own amusement. I can never forget him. He was a fine fellow, but though he might preach, he could not act. Before the play was half over he got bewildered; and in the last scene, completely confounded. A friend of his, a *logic-looking* dog, undertook to prompt him, and the scene went on thus:—

BEVERLEY.—(*In a whisper.*)—What's the word?

LOGIC.—(*At the wing.*)—Oh give it up, and say "I've swallowed poison!"

BEVERLEY.—(*In a whisper.*)—Hey?

LOGIC.—(*At the wing.*)—“I've swallowed poison!”

BEVERLEY.—(*In a whisper.*)—What?

LOGIC.—(*At the wing, out of patience.*)—“I've swallowed—poison!”

BEVERLEY.—(*Bewildered.*)—Hey?

LOGIC.—(*Throwing down the book.*)—“Oh, die Sir! damn it, die!”

And he left his friend to the mercy of the actors.

Gentlemen amateurs, with few exceptions, are the worst of the amateur *genus*. It is remarked, that the gentleman of the stage is not the gentleman of private life ; it is certain the gentleman of private life is the most ungentlemanly creature imaginable on the stage ; and it is as certain that fellows, of no mark or likelihood, have aped gentility, though vilely ; and hence it is, that men taken from the middle grade of society make the best artists : because a feeling of degradation does not wither their energies, and their knowledge of life gives a portraiture, not a burlesque, on nature. Kenilworth, Warwick Castle, Guy's Cliff, and the noted Pea-green Hayne, came under my observation, else my stay in Leamington had been altogether profitless ; but I left it without sorrow, and terminated my first engagement with Bennett, in Rodolph, at the Worcester races.

After an absence of seven months, I returned to my former station, in the Plymouth theatre, and received a most cheering welcome. (19) The first night commenced with a dulness, which shed its influence over the whole season. We made a bad beginning, and a worse ending. Bernard, who once managed the old theatre, and stood high in the estimation of the world, opened in Lord Ogleby ; but neither to his own, or the public satisfaction. He had outlived his energies, and even his old friends and admirers could see no trace of that humour, which in by-gone days had shone so conspicuously in Jemmy Jumps. It is a matter of deep regret, that an actor's necessities should keep him on the stage one hour beyond the time when his fame shows the first symptom of decline ; for he never

recovers from the disease, though early recollections offer past services as a panacea, and pity extends the charitable hand. Performers had better beg for bread than continue on the stage, when the infirmities of age, or the caprice of taste, subjects them first, to indifference, and finally, contempt. A sexagenarian manager was reasoned with on his intention to play a juvenile tragedy hero, and he replied, in anger, "Why, I've played George Barnwell for forty years, and it's damned hard if I can't play him now." But the audience commisserated his weakness, and punished his folly, by allowing him to play to empty benches. There are many like him. Bernard, the boon companion of nobles, a universal favourite, fell rapidly from his proud station ; and when I saw him was even the jest of the call-boy and prompter.

This season was prolific with stars, Sinclair, Liston, and Macready, shone upon us and drew crowded houses. Sinclair (20) is the best acting singer in the profession, with the most graceful carriage I ever beheld ; and his non-engagement in London is amongst the unaccountables of metropolitan management. Liston, the inimitable Liston, whose face is said to be his fortune, and whom the majority of actors call *a lucky man*, in my estimation is less indebted to face and fortune for celebrity than any other comedian. His judgment is excellent—his humour rich, racy, and overflowing, and would be irresistible in effect, even if he had the features of Adonis. Comicality of face may help, but it is not indispensable to produce comic effect, inasmuch as the best comedians of my acquaintance, fellows of infinite mirth, are all "good-

looking gentlemen." Liston passed through the usual provincial privations in his path to London; and in his youthful days aimed at the dignities of tragedy not unsuccessfully. He received unqualified applause at Plymouth; but in Worcester, where I had the pleasure again to meet him, his acting was thought inferior to that of Cassup and Shuter! Macready opened in Hamlet. The prejudice felt against this distinguished artist is the most unjust that can be imagined. I believe it still exists, though with less violence than heretofore; but even now he is the terror of country theatres. My antipathies against him were strongly excited by the reports of my brother actors; and I treated him with a rudeness, which, at this hour, I remember with compunction. A few years after I apologized for my conduct, because my increased experience increased my respect for the consequence of a tragedian; and I felt the infirmities and sensitiveness of a man, so deservedly eminent as Macready, should be endured at least. He has a fair excuse in the insolent self-sufficiency of performers for the excitement of his ill-humour; and I found the reserve of genius was mistaken for hauteur. Macready shows nothing but the becoming pride of a gentleman; and if actors were more accommodating, he would be less irritable. As an actor he is faultless, for he conceives with judgment, and executes with truth. He is Virginius, and Hamlet, and Tell, as completely as if the souls of his heroes had entered him when he assumed the garb of each character. Nothing could rouse him from his identity in the scene, if the actors were only perfect; not

even the uproar of an overflowing half-price, than which, the confusion of Babel is not more confounding. Once, however, I saw him at fault in the Shrewsbury theatre, in William Tell. The Shrewsbury butchers are proverbially a noisy crew, and on the night of his benefit the crowd and confusion was so terrific, Macready “stuck dead” in player parlance ; and after many unsuccessful efforts, obtained a pause in the storm, and addressed his friends thus, “ Ladies and gentlemen, I have played William Tell many, many times, but indeed the frightful noise you make entirely drives the recollection of the words from me.” An awful silence ensued for a moment, when a bull-like voice shouted from the gallery “ Why you have a good house, you ——, so go on, go on !” and he did go on, though he appeared annihilated by the rude command.

In due course Brunton brought out a continuation of the *Der Freischutz* horrors, in the melo-drama of *Faustus* ; in which, contrary to my wish, I played Mephistophiles, but so much to the public satisfaction, that I received the distinguishing cognomen of “ *The Devil*.” *Faustus*, however, did not succeed like the *Freischutz* ; notwithstanding, as a literary composition it could bear no comparison. The music was beautiful, and the scenery and dresses altogether excellent. It was well acted also—Stuart was transcendently good in *Faustus*—Bennett, as Wagner, played *con amore*—Wilton and Gardner played for reputation—Mrs. S. Bennett, as *Lucetta*, sang charmingly—Miss Kimble looked lovelily and acted well—and the pretty Louisa Brunton

won all hearts in the Fair Adine. Yet the Faustus failed, I think, because "the Devil spoke truth." The advocates of the theatre contend that a good moral is always found in a good play ; this I know, but I likewise know that people do not visit the theatre for instruction ; amusement is the grand object ; and though Hamlet says "I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play have, by the very cunning of the scene, been struck so to the soul, that presently they have proclaimed their malefactions," I doubt whether any man or woman ever left the theatre, "warned by despair," or gave sign of sin, even by "occult guilt." (21) I repeat, amusement, not instruction, is the grand object on visiting the theatre ; and disappointment, nay disgust, is felt when that object is frustrated—no matter how : therefore Faustus did not please, for Mephistophiles spoke home truths.

When I had proved my strength in Mephistophiles, on the first night, I devoted more study to the character ; and, in the opinion of the critical, made it my masterpiece. I suggested some alterations in the last scene, which Terry (the original *dæmon*) afterwards adopted with great applause, and obtained that credit for the business due alone to me. But professional people rarely give the "Devil his due." I gave the Countess Harrington, then Miss Foote, previously to her last visit to Ireland, a complimentary conundrum, which I afterwards saw in the *Age* newspaper, printed nearly word for word, as "*the last from the Kildare Club.*" As the Kildare Club did not disclaim it, I presume the thing had wit ; and it was therefore unfair to foist my bantling on another

father. It may seem out of place to mention these “pilferings of the brain,” but my stock of good things is so very small, I cannot afford to be robbed without complaining. A few weeks preceding the benefits, the Plymouth Bank stopped payment, (22) and entirely disappointed the expectations of the actors, my benefit falling from £120. to £33. and the others, with the exception of Miss Huddart’s, which reached £100. suffering in the same proportion. Her success mortified me not a little, proving, as it did, that something like caprice filled my house on my first benefit. Had she shared the common fate, I should have thought “poverty my enemy;” but that was not so, for I saw her benches crowded by parties calling themselves my friends and admirers ! The Plymouth public treated me in this instance most cruelly—I had made great pecuniary sacrifices to return to them—my reputation decidedly stood on higher ground—they applauded me with increased warmth—yet they withheld the only certain pledge of their approbation, and thereby subjected me to much inconvenience. The public are no more justified in cheating an actor with false hopes, than an actor in treating a liberal audience with contempt; and acting on this idea of reciprocal obligation, I walked through the remainder of the season with cool indifference; and I said I would never more play in the Plymouth theatre, and circumstance has kept me honest to my vow. Every evil has its remedy, and every mortification is counterpoised by some real or imaginary gratification; else, so frequent are “the spurns of fortune,” the heart would break. My

vexations were soothed by the kind condolence of many friends ; but the following letter, from ladies eminent for their exalted virtues, acted like a charm on my wounded spirit :—

“THE Miss M—— most exceedingly regretted Mr. Dyer did not receive the tribute of public approbation his great merit, in the walk of life he has chosen, so eminently deserves ; and which at all times is awarded him in private circles, whenever his performance is the subject of conversation.

“Many untoward, unavoidable circumstances, occurred on Monday night, to injure Mr. Dyer’s benefit ; several *large dinner* parties, two *dances*, &c. &c. added to which, the intensity of the cold prevented some families from the country from attending the theatre, that the Miss M—— knew would otherwise have supported him. The Miss M—— endeavoured strenuously to serve Mr. Dyer, and shall have great pleasure in repeating their exertions on a future day.

“The Miss M—— were highly gratified through the whole of the performance on Monday.”

January 11th, 1826.

Much surprize being expressed at my non-engagement by Richard Brunton, when he opened the Birmingham theatre, I think it justice to my past fame to note, now I am winding up my account of vanity, that “the surest way to make your friend your enemy is to lend him money.” The debt is cancelled ; but I am satisfied if he had possessed the feelings of Peregrine towards Job Thornberry, expressed in the speech ending in “his reliever,” he had insisted on my services as strongly, as he did before I had the pleasure of serving him. Bennett desired to re-engage me for Wolverhampton ; but he could not wait a month for me, and in consequence, the last night in Plymouth left me unemployed. Idleness neither suited my pocket nor inclination,

and being advised, I made the preliminary arrangements, and commenced manager in the delightful Tavistock, with a company whose general merit was gathered from the following criticism, published in the Plymouth Herald. (23)

“ *To the EDITOR of the PLYMOUTH HERALD*”

“ TAVISTOCK THEATRICALS.”

“ *Videndum est, ut ea liberalitate utamur quæ pro sis
noceat nemini.*”

CIC. 1

“ Sir,—For some days past this town has been somewhat relieved, from the general monotony of its amusement, by the presence of a company of comedians, under the management of Mr. Dyer, late of the Plymouth Theatre. So many years have elapsed since a regular dramatic establishment made its appearance here, that from the moment of its announcement, the interest was on tiptoe; and, if we may form a judgment of it from the few nights that have already passed, there can be no doubt, but that Mr. Dyer’s Tavistock campaign will be at least a profitable one. We should be somewhat wanting in justice if we did not acknowledge that Mr. Dyer has already acquired, to the people of Devonshire, by whom that fame was watched over and nursed into its luxuriancy, and to the literary acumen of Tavistock itself, we did not to communicate, when our leisure serves, such information of the performers, as their performances justly demand, with regard to previous eulogy or previous censure; we shall, however, qualify, with the true spirit of the motto we have chosen, strictly determine, without powerful motives step in to interfere in the determination, ‘to use such liberality as may be proper, to our friends, hurtful to nobody.’ Actors are the proper amusement of the public; and although it may be a custom among the high and the Stars, in their hemisphere, to repose in provincial cities, on the applause awarded them by a metropolitan audience, we caution Mr. Dyer, in the true spirit of genuine kindness, to take no warrant from so pernicious an example: and here we say, that from the boards of a Theatre, even so obscure as Tavistock, it is possible a wreath may be bound round a name, more durable than the laurels of profuse and unmeaning popularity, because, if yielded, it will be the meed of sound judgment.”

ferred on sound and critically-tried merit. Without further preface, Mr. Editor, we will now proceed to name the performances which have already taken place. The Theatre opened on Wednesday the 8th instant, with "The Liar," "The Day after the Wedding," and "Raising the Wind." On the opening of a Provincial Theatre it is unfair, at all times, to offer criticism; it shall suffice us therefore to say, that Mr. Dyer had no reason to be dissatisfied with the audience, nor the audience with his company. Mr. Strickland's Papillion was genuine; Mr. Dyer's Young Wilding spirited, and all the other characters respectably filled; the lady Elizabeth Freeloove, by Mrs. Baker, should not be forgotten, for it was well enacted; the Sam, of Mr. Strickland, in "Raising the Wind," truly excellent. Friday the 10th, the tragedy of "Bertram," with "Simpson and Co." Bertram, Mr. Dyer; Imogine, Miss Flindell, from the Exeter Theatre. Miss Flindell is a very young actress, and if we comment on her performance of the very arduous character of Imogine, it is because we see in her a hope of future excellence, and think her really worthy the trouble of criticism; Miss Flindell has not only much to learn, but what is still more difficult, she has much to unlearn: we strenuously advise her to use frequent and athletic exercise, as the only certain means to arrive at free and graceful action; she should know that the three great requisites in impassioned delivery are, action! action! action! but it must be graceful and unrestrained, and to be so, it must be natural, not studied. She has also an unfortunate enunciation in thrilling all words compounded with the letter R, which we are since glad to hear somewhat corrected; but her face is decisively adapted for tragic casts, capable of great expression, and, under the management of a little more knowledge of stage effect, must finally place her far above mediocrity: her frantic gaze at the countenance of Bertram, in their last interview but one; and her agonised good night to St. Aldobrand, on his retiring to his chamber just previous to his murder, were admirable pieces of acting, and produced their full effect upon a crowded house: her conception, however, of the description of woman's love, to Clotilda, at the opening of the second act, was unhappy, and tended materially to lessen her powers in the latter and more difficult scenes; as a whole however, her delineation of the character elicited and deserved applause. Of Mr. Dyer's Bertram, it is only necessary to say, that he looked "the man of wo," and personified the unbending firmness of one hardened only by despair, admirably; in the scene where the Prior of St. Anselm declares himself to be his father, we question whether the acting of Mr. Dyer was ever excelled. The Prior of Mr. Jones, and

the first Monk of Mr. Wells, were respectable performances. In the farce Mr. Dyer as Bromley, Mrs. Dyer as Mrs. Bromley, and Mrs. Baker as Mrs. Simpson, evinced perfect conception of their different characters, and drew down great applause; but the gem of the piece was undoubtedly Mr. Strickland's Mr. Simpson, a performance we have but very rarely seen equalled. The precision of the man of business—the wonder at the riddles which surround him, and which are thickened by the peccadilloes of his partner—the dry and excellent humour with which he turns the tables on Bromley, when he at last discovers the whole matter—was given with a gest and truth highly honourable to the professional character of Mr. Strickland, and stamp him with the possession of no common talent. We have heard this gentleman was kept back at the Plymouth theatre. Mr. Bennett is one of our oldest acquaintances in Mr. Strickland's walk of comedy; and notwithstanding our respect for his well-earned fame, we dare to say he might have yielded his post to Mr. Strickland without a blush, and the public would have been the gainer. February 13th, Jane Shore, the Rendezvous, and Simpson and Co. was repeated by particular desire. We have only time to say that the Jane Shore of Mrs. Baker was well acted, the weakness arising from inanimation in the last scene was admirably depicted, and showed the versatility of this lady's talents to great advantage. Miss Flindell's Alicia was in general respectable, at times exceedingly happy; and in the last scene admirably acted. Mr. Dyer's Dumont did not disappoint his audience. Of Mr. Giles, as Lord Hastings, we say nothing, as it was his first appearance, and he evidently laboured under severe catarrh. Mr. Wells, as Belmour, improved in the good opinion of the house. We say nothing of Mr. Strickland's Catesby; it is out of his line; but we should be wanting in common justice to Mr. Jones, did we omit to mention, that his personification of the tyrant Glo'ster, was highly creditable to him. The busy Interlude of the Rendezvous went off with great spirit; the Quake of Mr. Jones, and the Sophia of Mrs. Baker, drew down great and deserved applause. Simpson and Co. was repeated with no loss of fame to the actors already eulogised in that piece, though we forgot to mention that Mrs. Kendall, as Madame la Trappe, was perfectly at home. February 15th, the Child of Nature, with the farce of Deaf as a Post. Mrs. Baker, as Amanthis, delineated that difficult, because extremely natural character, with great fidelity—her *naiveté*, gentleness, and innocent gaiety, were clearly and well defined throughout; in fact this lady gains upon us, and bids fair to become as great a favourite among us, as laugh-exciting Strickland himself. There

are few things more agreeable to the impartial and enlightened than the power of bestowing praise; Mrs. Baker deserves it of us, and we yield it with a pleasure commensurate with the satisfaction she affords us. The Marchioness of Merida of Miss Flindell—the Count Valentia of Mr. Dyer—and the Alberto of Mr. Wells—were chaste and spirited performances; and the entire piece went off with great clearness, and under the support of exceedingly respectable and oftentimes truly admirable acting. Deaf as a Post, with which the memory of Liston cannot fail of association, so long as the present generation of play-going people shall live, suffered nothing by being acted here with Mr. Strickland for Tristram Sappy, Mr. Dyer as Captain Templeton, and Mrs. Dyer as Sally Maggs. On Mr. Strickland's general merits we can scarcely trust our pen, as it must needs run into eulogy; but we scruple not an instant to assert that he would be a valuable acquisition to any dramatic corps in the kingdom; and we confidently predict, that, if sound conception of character, irresistible humour of delineation, and that true comic gravity which never failed to electrify with laughter, a laughter-loving audience—if the possession in a high degree of these talents bid fair to lead a man to the summit of his profession, we repeat that we confidently predict Mr. Strickland will one day reach that summit, and we shall rejoice to hear it.

“ We have a good deal to say to Mr. Dyer, but neither our time nor limits, at present, permit us. We are sure the patronage Mr. Dyer has hitherto received, must be exceedingly gratifying to him; and we are sure he will endeavour to merit its continuance. But we caution him against impolitic advisers; we caution him to be the master of his own green-room.—*A word to the wise, and from the wise*—that word is enough. Next week, Mr. Editor, you shall hear from us again.”

“ Tavistock, February 16, 1826.”

Introduced by my honourable patron, the Earl Morley, to the immediate notice of John Carpenter, Esq. and Mr. Wilson; known individually to many, by reputation to all, I made my *début* in Tavistock, under the most favourable circumstances; and retired after a two months' season with the esteem of all whose approbation is an honour. But my scheme only gave me a profit of about £8. for

my arrangements were too liberal. I gave unwarrantable salaries, and benefit terms, that no service rendered me could justify ; though my worthy friends, Mrs. B—— and Mr. S——, giving me no credit for my toils, my talent, or for covering their insignificance under the wing of my respectability, attributed my success solely to their exertions, and thought themselves very badly paid. The conduct of this lady and gentleman disgusted me. I received them at my table—I made my fame secondary to theirs—studied their comforts and convenience—“crammed them,” as the man says in the play “with every thing but gratitude,” and in return they traduced me vilely, and sundered old friends from me. All but this I could have forgiven, perhaps, have thanked them for their conduct. For ever after I advantaged by the lesson they gave me, and my suspicions secured me from further deception. The countenance shown me by my generous patrons, Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Wilson, obtained me the notice of the late Colonel Bray, of N. Rundle, T. Robins, and J. Gill, Esqrs. to the latter of whom I believe I am indebted for this impromptu and note :—

And under their auspices, aided by the influence of the worthy Portgreve Mr. Martin, Mr. Richard Gribbell, and others I am proud to call my friends, my managerial reign proceeded prosperously, and ended in the payment of all demands—rather a singular occurrence with ephemeral managers, and therefore I make it a boast. My sense of gratitude for the support bestowed on me is commensurate to the obligation, and will ever be treasured amongst the most pleasing of my theatrical recollections. In country theatres, comic incidents will sometimes occur in the most tragic scenes, through the innocent simplicity of the audience. On one occasion we played *Lovers' Vows*; and when Frederick inquired “Is there a doctor in the village?” a matter-of-fact countryman replied in a tone of sympathy “Oh yes, Sur, there's Old Parfit, the horse-doctor, lives up in town.” On my first performance of *William*, in *Black-Eyed Susan*, my musical powers being rather deficient, I sang the verse

“ All in the Downs the fleet was moored, &c.”

to the tune of the *Storm*; when a kind, weak-hearted creature, dissolved in tears at my supposed sorrows, sobbed aloud “Poor fellow, he's so cut up, he's forgot the tune!” And the indignation of a man at my villainy, in *Miles Bertram*, expressed itself in an earnest request to *Walter Bernard*, in the last scene, “To knock the rascal's brains out.” The commendation of an unknown friend occasioned the subjoined letter:—

“Theatre Royal, York, 7th April, 1826.

“Sir,

“Some short time ago I had a conversation with a gentleman named Davies, a very particular friend of mine, resident in London. He had seen you act, and spoke in terms which have induced me to address you, agreeable to the promise I made him in case of an opening for you. The heavy business is, by the death of my late partner, Mr. Faulkner, now vacant—I mean such as Pizarro and Iago; and in fact the whole of that line. Your immediate reply will very much oblige

“Your obedient servant,

“T. J. DOWNE.”

“P.S.—Should you feel disposed to treat with me, what time could you join.”

To this hour I am personally unacquainted with Mr. Davies, and perhaps I shall never have opportunity to thank him for his good opinion; and I regret it, for disinterested kindness should ever be acknowledged. I did not accept Downe’s offer, because the Pizarro’s and Iago’s had never been my study. Yet, knowing how much a York engagement would advance my professional consequence, I negotiated, unsuccessfully, for the *melo-dramatic* business. (24) Towards the close of my management, I began a correspondence with the well-known Henry Lee, and finally agreed to take the stage direction of his theatres. Thus, the first four years saw my triumph as an actor—my uneasy dignity as a manager—and my entrance on the responsible, but thankless, duties of a stage-manager, in which I continued, with the exception of four months, to the end of my public existence.

FIFTH YEAR.

“ FALSTAFF.—My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

PISTOL.—Two yards, and more.

FALSTAFF.—No quips now, Pistol ; indeed I am in the waist two yards about ; but I am now about no waste ; I am about thrift.”

“ BENVOLIO.—Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.”

SHAKSPEARE.

UNDER Lee’s management Liston, Kean, and Vandenhoff, had vegetated on less than “ £300. per year ;” and I naturally enough felt a disposition “ to breathe the air they breathed,” and to see the man, who, beside being “ a pretty poet,” had claimed Caleb Quotem for his own, and branded Colman as a plagiarist. We met in his parlour, in Taunton, and if the proportions of a Lambert formed part and parcel of a genius, Lee appeared indeed a great man on that account alone. My first impression was decidedly unfavourable towards him, for I had always conceived obesity a non-adjunct to mental energy ; but when he roused from his lethargy, the load of flesh was

no hindrance to the upsoaring of his spirit ; and I found him such as my fancy pictured—acute, but good-natured—brilliant, but eccentric. Engrossed by my duties as actor and manager, my opportunities for conversation with Lee were unfortunately too few ; yet our esteem was mutual, and I sincerely wish I had means to show my regard for him otherwise than in words. As a poet, his pretensions are considerable—imagination, point, and versatility, characterize his style ; and I am sure the following extracts from his poems, in confirmation of my opinion, will be acceptable to my readers.

“ FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

A Masonic Ode.

“ WHEN FAITH left her mansion celestial for earth,
On seraphim plumes she was borne through the sky ;
The crown o'er her temples betoken'd her birth,
The *gem* on her bosom, behests from on high.
Gliding softly thro' clouds by irradiancy clear'd,
Sweet HOPE, with a smile, like an angel appear'd ;
As friends they approach'd, interchanging the *sign*,
On Earth thus cementing a union divine !

“ To join this lov'd pair, while discoursing below,
Mild CHARITY came, her best gifts to divide ;
All the blessings of life, 'twas resolv'd they'd bestow
Where Honour, with Virtue and Truth, should preside :
This world FAITH supported—HOPE promised another,
While CHARITY bound man to man as his brother ;
By *signs*, *words*, and *tokens* this system began—
The *Eye of the Deity* sanction'd the plan !

“ An abode free from guile these fair strangers now sought,
 Where Folly with footstep unhallow'd ne'er trod,
 Where Wisdom held converse—Morality taught,
 And Man paid true homage to Virtue and God.
 Despairing they droop'd, long in darkness astray,
 Till a Light, like a star from the East, led the way :
 They enter'd the Lodge—all their wishes were crown'd !
 Here—FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY ever are found.

“ O'er Masons presiding, these virtues combine—
 FAITH beckons to join the Grand Master above ;
 HOPE points through heaven's arch to the regions divine,
 And CHARITY teaches peace, friendship, and love !—
 To ALL WHO DESERVE be these principles shown,
 The *Craft* is most honour'd when most it is known :
 May Truth's sacred records to man be unsurl'd,
 And FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY govern the world ! ”

“ BELLES LETTRES.

“ LOVELY Jemima is a *book* of bliss—
 Her *word* a *page*!—a *volume* in her kiss !
 Her look the *frontispiece*—(a *proof impression*)—
 Her wit the *preface*, void of vague *digression*.
 Her smile a *literal beauty*. When she's vex'd,
 Her frown—a pointed *note* upon the *text*.
 By Hymen *bound*, I prize the precious lore,
 Peruse it daily—every *leaf* turn o'er.
 The more I read, more loath I from it part,
 Resolved the whole *contents* to get by heart !
 Catching its spirit, charm'd with its address,
 I hail, with joy, the *freedom of the press* !”

“ EPITAPH ON JAMES SHATFORD,

Who died at Newport, Isle of Wight.

“ IF e'er the prescient eye of Genius caught,
At one quick view, the wide extremes of thought;
If e'er, at Memory's call, ideas sprung,
Or fell in mended accent from the tongue;
If genuine wit—a mind with knowledge stored,
Or repartee, e'er crown'd the social board,
With eloquence, that, under favouring star,
Had graced the Senate, or illumed the Bar—
Such gifts were THINE.—A host of friends appear,
And sanction this faint record with a tear.
SHATFORD farewell!—all who thy merits scan,
Attest the GENIUS—FRIEND—and HONEST MAN.”

“ Throw Physic to the Dogs,” on which his dramatic fame is based, is not a lucky hit; it is dull, notwithstanding the mercurial spirit of Caleb Quotem. Lee was justly offended at Colman's unacknowledged transfer of the part into the farce of the Review, though he found the original outline of his hero, in his friend M—, of Bridport. Of his powers, as an actor, I can offer no judgment; I saw him it is true in Job Thornberry, Sir George Touchwood, and his Quotem, but Job he played in the dog-days—Sir George Touchwood was whimsical by contrast with the petite figure of his Lady Francis—Mrs. Dyer;—Ossa and the Wart,—and Caleb, he played sitting! Report, however, spoke of him as a clever performer—I thought him a heavy one! Keep him from politics, and Lee was a delightful companion; and in the hey-day of youth and spirits must have been irresistible. He spoke of Kean, whom he assisted with means to make

his fortunate journey to town, with enthusiasm. The great tragedian, on his first starring visit to Taunton, received £50. per night, in the theatre where formerly he received 15s. per week ; and remembering his past obligation to his old manager, he very liberally gave him his last night's services, equivalent of course to £50. Lee's opinions and actions are all eccentric. He maintains that a frying-pan sounds "poor Juliet's knell" much better than a funeral bell ; and that *anything* in the way of imitation is better than *nothing* ; and on the first night of *Der Freischutz*, the eagle being out of the way when Caspar fired, he snatched off poor old Lloyd's wig, and threw it on the stage, as the representative of "Jove's own bird." Our verbal communications being few, he frequently favoured me with notes of instruction, and written criticisms ; and I beg to insert a portion of them, illustrative of his wit, and originality of thought.

" Dear Sir,

" You will be good enough to make out the—
what shall I say ? the *copy* for the printer. Hang the word **BILL**, I have seen so many frightful ones lately, that I don't like the *sight* or *sound* of **BILLS** of any sort ! In my present humour, if I were to chuse even a *singing bird*, it should be one *without a BILL* ! otherwise its sweetest *warbling* would put my *nerves* out of *tune*, *jar* with my *feelings*, and produce *nothing* but *discord* ! Even the very point of a *Bird's BILL* would *peck* at the *tenderest* part of my *imagination* ! and *pick up* *scattered* ideas into a *frightful SUM TOTAL* ! And an *infinite number* of *musical notes*, would only remind me of the want of *even a single paper one* ! !

" Send me the *copy* required, and I will forward it to the *Printer's Devil* ! "

" Yours, (but, not *Blue-devilish* !)

" HENRY LEE."

" Sunday—a *fun* day—because not a *dun* day ! "

“ The manager thinks it necessary to make a few remarks. He is *satisfied* with his performers, because the *public* have been so ; but he fears the *contrary* is likely to take place, and merely from thoughtlessness, or sheer *folly*.

“ 'Tis the *interest* and *duty* of performers to *cover*, as far as possible, the *errors* of each other, and not to *laugh* at, and *expose* them.

“ If there are any persons in the company who *trifle* with, or *slight* the *manager's* (or *Mrs. Lee's*) *good opinion*, they are requested to *give notice*, and leave the company at the end of a *month*, (or, *less* than a *month*, if more convenient to themselves). Some may not know the manager sufficiently. He is very often to *blame*, being too *easy* ; but he would cut off his *right hand*, did it *disobey* by refusing its required *services*.”

“ HENRY LEE.”

“ Dear Sir,

“ I trust that *Mrs. Lee* has already informed you, (*in part*, at least,) of what has passed during my *journey*, and my stay at this place (Bridport). *Hurry* and *bustle*, and *quick change* to *COLD*, threw me *ill* for 3 days ; but, thank God, I am now *WELL*. And what makes the matter still *better*, I have all things *now* well in *train* for their full accomplishment. You will, of course, show this to *Mrs. Lee*, and she will consult with *you* and *Mr. Woods*, &c. about the *scenery*, *wagon*, and all other matters.

“ Perhaps I cannot do better than give you a general *outline* or *sketch* of my *plan* and *place* for a theatre ; for nobody, without 40 years' experience, could have done what I have already accomplished, and what I have *still* to do, in order to make *all* *comfortable*.

SKETCH (FOR MRS. LEE TO EXPLAIN).

FRONT STREET.

Bull Inn.

Houses, &c.

Actor's Gate.

Wheelwright's Yard.

Stove.

Dressing Rooms.

This the Stage End.

A

*

A

B. . . . B

PASSAGE.

BOXES.

PIT.

Audience Door.

GALLERY.

This—got stone walls, somewhat
too low, but will be *warm*, &c.

“Imagine the *centre* of the town—near the head inn (the Bull)—going down a passage, and which passage communicates with *other streets*; so that *shy folks* may come without being seen, (a great object here.)

“A * A, and dressing-rooms, all taken out of the *yard*; and all (except the *side walls*) to be covered in with *boards*, (what is called **WEATHER BOARDED.**) B....B—This is one of the most difficult jobs I ever had; brick walls to be partly taken down, and I fear, to be put up again.

“I am afraid that the utmost height of the *curtain* and *drop scene* can be only 12 or 13 feet high; (the *same* perhaps in *breadth*,) but of this I will tell you more when I write again. At all events Mr. Woods must bring some scenes that will do for *Dorchester*, as I *hope* I shall afterwards go there. I am already *trying* what can be done there with regard to the *theatre*, for *permission* I have already obtained.”

“Excuse haste,

“Yours, &c.

“HENRY LEE.”

“OBSERVATIONS ON HAMLET, ALEXANDER, CATO, BURLESQUE TRAGEDY, &c.

“I consider HAMLET one of the *greatest* efforts of *Human Genius*! enough to *immortalize* SHAKSPEARE had he never written any thing else! I consider ALEXANDER more as an *Epic Poem*, than as a *PLAY*; like the *Iliad*, &c. it is descriptive of the *actions* of supposed *gods*—or *men like gods*—or anything but plain, *common men*! As a *poetic* composition it will carry down the author’s name to *posterity*! He has been long styled *mad Lee*! the poet.

“The tragedy of CATO is somewhat *different* from the *two former*; not so much *poetic genius* as the *first*, but more *precision*; not so *natural*, but more *regular* and less *faulty*! Both the former have faults, on the other hand CATO is, perhaps, without a single *fault*; only, as far as regards the *plan*, or *rule*, on which it is composed! It has *genius*, but not so *conspicuous*

as in HAMLET ; much fire, but it does not *blaze* as in ALEXANDER ! It possesses gigantic *strength* of mind, but that *strength* is *measured* and *restrained* ! " 'Tis one thing to possess a giant's *strength*, another thing to use it like a giant ! "

" CATO will transmit the name of its author (Mr. Addison) down to future generations, as a man of infinite scholastic acquirements, with the soundest judgment, and *genuine* natural talents. The *versatility* and playfulness of thought, often shown in the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, &c. and the *simplicity* of character, and rich *humour* displayed in the comedy of the *Drummer*, are all so many proofs of good *sound sense* ! and are sufficient to convince us, that this accomplished writer could, whenever he chose, descend from his lofty *stilts*, and *walk* and *talk* like common men ! And that he could, like his own *Sir Roger de Coverly*, make himself agreeable, at all times, and with all parties !

" *Burlesque Tragedy* ! I certainly consider of a *less dignified*, perhaps of a *less noble* nature, than *Hamlet*, *Alexander*, or *Cato* ! but, perhaps, justly considered, equally *useful*, as far as it tends towards the *amusement* of mankind ! for *amusement* I consider as necessary as *sleep*, *food*, or *physic* ! *Burlesque*, under certain restraints, and rightly applied, is *more useful* than *tragedy*, because 'tis *safer*, if not *wiser*, to be walking sometimes on *earth*, rather than always soaring above the clouds ! *High TRAGEDY* is far *above* the clouds ! *Epic POETRY* higher still ! as MILTON says " *It draws empyreal air* !" *High Comedy* too is above the *horizon* till *day* breaks on the understanding ! it then alights on *earth* with a *mien* most delightful and fascinating. *Plain Comedies* are never seen till about *noon*, when men's eyes are completely *open*, but too often *dazzled* by appearances ! *MELODRAMAS*, and *FARCE*, generally pop in about *tea time* ; but *BURLESQUE* is scarcely ever seen till *supper time* ! And *COMMON SENSE* makes it a *rule* never to *show her face*, till all the rest of the company are either *gone*, or are *asleep*, or are *fuddled*, or got into so very good a *humour*, that they are delighted to see *Common Sense*, and listen (for a *time*, at least,) patiently listen, to the *plain truths* she points out to them !

" Now, by the *bye*, here we see the progress of *TRUTH* and *COMMON SENSE* ! The man that *dies* in the *morning of life*, he sees only *mists*, and a weak, glimmering *sunshine* ! If he lives till *noon* only, he sees somewhat *more*, but still imperfectly, by the glare of *false*, or *refracted lights* ! But if he *dies* before *supper time*, he never sees *Burlesque*, and, of course, never becomes acquainted with either *Good Humour*, *PLAIN TRUTH*, or *COMMON SENSE* !

“ So far by the way of *prefuse*,—now, to return to the subject we started with—HAMLET. Whenever we read a *Poem*, or see, or read a *Play*, we ought to give the *reins* of our understanding into the *hands* of the *author*; to see nothing but in the *light* he directs us; and to *cry*, or *laugh*, just as may best suit the *scene* before us !

“ It will not do for us to ask *Hamlet’s Ghost* how his *cap* and *armour* came to remain of so bright a *polish*, after being so long *entombed*? Nor would it be proper to inquire of this *Kingly Ghost* (a gentleman, of course), how he could talk to his son, a *handsome*, well-bred *youth*, about his *hair* being *knotted* and *combined*? as if he never used a *comb*, or employed a *barber*! And then again—each *hair* on his *head* standing on *end*, as *thick* and as *strong* as the *quills* of a *porcupine*! It would be ill-natured to ask these questions; because we find that on other occasions he can be familiar, and talk of a *clout* being placed where *once* a *diadem* was. We ought to be pleased with these words, because we find—when he likes—he can use *common language*, like *common men* !

“ Imperial CÆSAR, dead and turn’d to clay,

“ May — { What, pray?—Overturn an Empire? or
conquer the *Universe*? Oh, no?—may

“ — stop a hole—to keep the wind away!”

“ Oh that, that *Earth*, which kept the world in awe,

“ Should — { What? do something *wonderful*?
Oh, no, &c. then *drop the voice*—and say

“ &c. * * * * * winter’s flaw ! ”

The above is (as *burlesque*) very good—in the *sublime*.

“ ’Tis the *quintessence* of dust ! ”

(More on this subject another time.)

His troop, gathered from the four quarters of Heaven, for the entertainment of the Somersetshire Yeomanry Cavalry, then called up in Taunton, for eight days' duty, had just that sort of talent which is dear at 10s. per week; though, undoubtedly, Mrs. Lee, the best old woman, and Woods, pre-eminently the best sententious old man on the stage, were exceptions to my general censure. We played but a week in Taunton; and a fortnight after began a six-weeks' unprofitable rustication in Collumpton, with a vastly improved company.—Here the days of my initiation—the Launceston stable—the Bodmin barn—returned. But in the delightful society of H. D. Melhuish, Esq. his excellent Lady, and her no less amiable relative Miss Morgan, I felt not the humiliation of being again a stroller. A loan from the latter lady enabled me to release the manager's "trumpery" from the strong hold of a rapacious landlord, who thought a wagon-load of stage finery a better security for his rent, than the manageress's "I promise to pay." I repaid this loan shortly after; but to this day I am proud of the honour she conferred on me by her confidence. Nor can I forget Mrs. Tapscott, of the White Hart, whose house I recommend to all travellers, as one of the best on the London road.

Wells, "the quiet city," next had the advantage of our talents, an *honour* it did not duly appreciate. (25) Then *vacillating* between Tiverton, Taunton, and Bridgwater Races, we at last settled for two happy months in Barnstaple. Devonshire hospitality is proverbial; and in the North of Devon it abounds, especially in Barum, where

the urbanity of the present Chief Magistrate R. W. Grace, Esq. and Richard Bremridge, Esq. give a welcome to the stranger, more gratifying than the luxuries of their tables. Intellectual and joyous were the hours passed amidst the elegancies of Castle Hill, and Boulport-Street, when their amiable mistresses, and their fair friends, added the charm of feminine wit and beauty to the scene. Mr. Bremridge patronized my benefit, and a crowd of loveliness and rank that night filled the theatre. I was also honoured by the notice of other families of the first consequence in the town ; and the prejudice of old associations being removed, the eminent Doctor Morgan distinguished me by his friendship, though I boldly condemned a drama he had translated from the French, and otherwise disputed his judgment on theatrical affairs. (26) My influence with the management obtained a benefit night for that excellent Institution, the North Devon Infirmary ; and the next day Doctor Morgan introduced me in the committee-room, as a *benefactor* to the charity. Amongst other testimonies of regard, a proposal was made to build a new theatre for me ; but I did not entertain the proposal, because I respected Lee, and knew my opposition to him would materially affect the comforts of his family. Some novelty being required, I brought out Faustus with an unusual degree of splendour, for Barnstaple ; but it failed, and thus confirmed my opinion, that an audience are averse to instruction. I left Barnstaple with heartfelt regret, not anticipating that in Bridport I should find friends, whose flattering and affectionate regard made

me all but forgot past pleasures. The considerate kindness of Mr. Bremridge had preceded my arrival, by preparing Edwin Nicholetts, Esq. to receive me with the freedom of a gentleman; and his favour was a passport to fashionable celebrity. But the society of some Devonshire intimates added greatly to our enjoyments, for they introduced my family to their circle of friends; and alternating between the social *etiquette*, and the familiar intercourse of life, we passed "a merry christmas" and began "a happy new year." (27) The Bridport theatre was the most wretched hole imaginable, Dawson's veriest barn being a palace by comparison; yet we were well followed.

Miss Foote gave *eclat* to our three first nights in Taunton, the receipts averaging £70. per night! This being my first meeting with the lady since her notoriety with Pea-Green Hayne, I felt curious to see what time had done for the playmate of my wife's childhood, whom I recollect as the "Hero" of "Much ado about Nothing," on her last night of innocence in the Plymouth old theatre. She appeared before me, beautiful indeed, with every charm increased by the adventitious aid of splendid dress and decoration; but I saw not one gleam of genius throughout her acting. She did everything well, but not greatly—she looked archly—spoke with point—and in all things went correctly through the business of the scene; but the look, the point, the business, all wanted originality; and I had no hesitation in believing her mother, when she said "*I, Sir, taught her all she knows.*" Subsequently, I played with her in Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c. and every succeeding

performance strengthened my opinion, that her ability had no share in producing her popularity. Two days before my first visit to Derby she married the Earl of Harrington, adding another to the list of actresses, by “love-sick lords” made honourable. No doubt her beauty and elegance will give lustre to a coronet; and the barely respectable actress may make an excellent Countess. The Taunton season shone bright with stars. A fortnight after Miss Foote, the bonnie Scotch Fiddle, Sinclair, came to us, and to the eternal shame of those who crowded her nights, he sang his sweetest songs to the melancholy tune of Seven Pound Houses. Clara Fisher, following after, shared no better treatment; and the beautiful syren, Emma Love, “wasted her sweetness on the desert air.” I could be satirical on the unanimity of the million-headed monster, the public, when fashion gives a name to vice; but I pass from the ungracious task of censure, to mention the pleasing circumstances attendant on my last days with Lee. Clara Fisher is a rare instance of precocious talent attaining mature perfection. The blossoms of her early genius ripened into fruit, unharmed by the hot breath of adulation, more fatal to young minds than cold indifference; for the one retards, but cannot stop the growth of intellect; the other withers in its prematurity. I saw her a mere child, the wonder of crowded houses, in *Norval*, *Pangloss*, *Tom Thumb*, and *Little Pickle*, seven years before our meeting in Taunton. I then saw her with unabated powers sustain the heroines of comedy. Not long after she went to America, and there enjoys that high

reputation which her unassuming virtues deserve. In return for my official attention, she obligingly played for my benefit, and therefore I had much pleasure in negotiating a profitable engagement for her in the Worcester theatre, when that establishment came under my stage-management. (28) Emma Love, now lost to the world, was at this period the brightest star in the theatrical hemisphere. Lovely "in her fair proportions," with a voice of matchless power and sweetness, she combined astonishing capabilities as an actress; and the witcheries of her voice gave place only to the deep pathos, or resistless humour of her character. Wherever I found an inclination to be obliged, there I was most obliging; and out of this reciprocity of sentiment, arose that amicable feeling between Miss Love and myself, which secured her comforts in all the theatres she visited under my control, and gained me her esteem, and most gratifying offers of service. Starring actors should be careful of the good will of a stage-manager, for though he does not pay, he can annoy them. By my instrumentality Miss Love first went into the Worcester circuit; and I believe realized a considerable sum by the speculation. On her last visit, she made an unsolicited offer to play for my benefit, but I could not avail myself of her kind intention, because Bennett refused to *fix* a night for me, in violation, as he said, of the rules of his theatre. But this was a contemptible subterfuge to avoid the mortification of seeing me with increased popularity and a full house. Managers never wish their actors rich, on the principle, that independence makes them less amenable to authority; nor

54 FIFTH LETTER.
popular, unless to their own advantage. For instance, not content with hindering me of a positive pecuniary advantage, Bennett sought to deprive me of the distinction arising from the fact, by clandestinely asserting that Miss Love never offered me her services. I could not endure this double wrong in silence ; and my address to the lady on the subject elicited the following letter, confirming my veracity :—

“ London, Monday, June 25.

“ My dear Sir,

“ We have just arrived in town, which will, I trust, excuse your letter not being earlier replied to.

“ I can only repeat what I said to you at Worcester, that if you could have fixed the time for your benefit, at the Worcester theatre, I should have had the greatest pleasure in performing on that occasion, as I know no one in the profession I have a higher respect for, than I have for Mr. Dyer. With best wishes for your success, and kind remembrance from mamma, I remain, my dear Sir,

“ Yours very truly,

“ E. LOVE.”

53, Margaret-Street, Cavendish-Square.

My last interview with this charming actress was in London, at the close of that season, when she so mysteriously quitted the stage, and buried in selfish retirement those brilliant acquirements, which belonged entirely to the public.

Amongst my Taunton friends, my chief obligations are due to the Miss' Goldsworthy, Mrs. Sayer, Mr. F. Leigh, Mr. Bluett, and — Beadon, Esq. But my good friend, Mr. Marriott, claims my best thanks for his laudatory criticisms in the Taunton Courier.

“ Mr. DYER, to whose abilities we have before borne willing testimony, displayed a degree of excellence which, though not uncommon in him, would entitle any one to much more than ordinary praise. If there be a better actor on the provincial boards, it is certain that we neither know nor have heard of him ; and this being the case, the visitors to the theatre will learn with regret, that Mr. DYER is no longer to gratify them by his exertions, having engaged to transfer his services to the management of the Worcester, Shrewsbury, and Wolverhampton theatres. We hear that this gentleman is possessed of no slight degree of erudition, and has heretofore held a situation as *tutor in the family of Earl Morley*. His father is a respectable farmer near Totnes ; and Mr. DYER himself possesses a respectable income, which he is seeking to improve, while he is gratifying his taste by devoting himself to a theatrical life. We wish him the success he so unquestionably deserves.”

My astonishment, on reading the above paragraph, may well be imagined ; for I found myself in description rich—*the son of a farmer*—and the heretofore *tutor in the family of Earl Morley*. The mistake as to my fortune or father was of little import, and did not require contradiction ; but fearing the noble Earl might see the article, and think it emanated from me, I called on the Editor, and requested his correction of the error. In consequence, in his next publication he inserted the following corrective paragraph, though he still “ buckled fortune on my back,” by ascribing to me the honours of an academic education.

“ Mr. DYER, as Billy Lackaday, very ably availed himself of the opportunity which that character afforded, of exhibiting the extraordinary versatility of his talent ; and was accordingly greeted by the audience with a very bountiful measure of applause. Miss Love performs again on Thursday ; and on Friday, for her benefit, when her engagement closes. The theatre is likely to present a full and fashionable company on

doubt my success in *Paul Pry*; yet I played the “Inquisitive” triumphantly in all Lee’s theatres, and in Taunton many preferred me to the great original—a proof, rather, of their good-nature, than their discernment. My interest compelled me to leave Lee, and rejoin Bennett, with the increased power of stage-manager, in Worcester, the fair city of my affections. But the pleasure of meeting old friends was dampt by the loss of Miss James, who died on the evening of our arrival. I have before spoken of her in terms of commendation; and now pay a parting tribute to her memory, by asserting, that her merits were far beyond my praise.

Worcester received me with an enthusiasm diametrically opposed to my reception by the company, whose repugnance to my authority had been excited by some of those creeping things that are found in every theatre; and who, conscious of their own worthlessness, seek to pull their superiors down to the “degraded level.” But, eventually, I negatived their malice, and made those my best friends, who had been taught to consider me their enemy. The celebrated R. W. Elliston at this time played to empty benches in Worcester, and I esteemed myself fortunate in an introduction to him under any circumstances. I had heard so much of the great lessee, and had formed such lofty ideas of him, that my disappointment was proportionate, when I beheld him in a thread-bare coat, and shabby hat, holding hail-fellow-well-met conversation with the underlings of the establishment. (29) I sighed over the wreck of what had

that night, a large proportion of the boxes being already taken. On Saturday, for that night only, Miss Love is to play at Bridgwater.

“ Mr. DYER took a benefit on Saturday last, which, though hastily arranged, did not prevent a very respectable attendance. And a general eagerness seemed to prevail, to testify how favourably the patrons of the theatre were impressed with a sense of this gentleman’s abilities. Mr. DYER took the opportunity of announcing his final departure from Taunton after Friday next—a communication certainly heard with sincere regret, by all who have witnessed his masterly delineations of histrionic character. We were misinformed in stating in our last that Mr. DYER had been a tutor in Earl Morley’s family. His classical and academical talents would no doubt have qualified him for so honourable an office; but it was only as a warm and generous patron that his Lordship bestowed on Mr. DYER his cherishing attentions.”

Marriott had his information from my young friend Dusantoy; but I most solemnly declare I was not in the slightest degree accessory to his delusion. I spoke with a natural pride of my honourable patron’s urbanity towards me—nothing more; my father’s name never passed my lips; and of independence or erudition I could not boast, without violating that truth which I have ever held most sacred. I have, however, always had the credit of being “a rich man,” for I and my family, throughout my professional life, sustained a wholly respectable appearance; and there is not a town in which my name is on the debtor’s side of an account, though my resources were derived entirely from the theatre. But my secret of independence consisted in never suffering my expenditure to exceed my income. Those who knew me only in the dignity of tragedy, will smile at the encomiums passed on my Billy Lackaday, and entirely

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been “the glass of fashion,” and warned by his example I began, from that hour, seriously to reflect on the uncertainty, and unprofitableness, of histrionic fame. His *Singles*, (the only character in which I saw him,) did not please me; it was dull and spiritless, like the melancholy few assembled on the occasion of his final leave-taking! In the summer of 1828 I witnessed his performance of *Walter*, in the *Children of the Wood*, at the *Surrey Theatre*, with extreme satisfaction; but even then imagination eked out the perfections, which his abated powers failed to display. He is now “gone to his account,” and his admirers say “We shall not look upon his like again.” Clara Fisher followed Elliston’s engagement; then Miss Love, Miss Foote, and Mr. J. Russell; and we hustled through the season with the further assistance of amateurs and minor stars—Usher and his cats, and Mons. Gouffé, the man-monkey.

S I X T H Y E A R .

“ You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man
for the constable of the watch ; therefore bear you the lantern.
This is your charge ; you shall comprehend all vagrom men.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE entrance on my sixth year was marked by the opening of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch new theatre, a very neat building erected at the expenc of Bennett. It became my duty to speak the introductory address ; and never poor unapplauded player felt more confounded than I did, when I came to the line “ Your plaudits cheer, &c.” for not a single hand had been joined to greet my entrance, or acknowledge the complimentary passages in the verses. But notwithstanding the thinness of the house, a strong, though *silent*, impression was made. The tide of public favour set in full upon us, which continued to the last night of the season. The inhabitants of this pleasant little watering-place are decidedly theatrical ;

after Christmas, we commenced the Wolverhampton season ; and during its progress I obtained a valuable acquisition to my patrons and friends in Stubbs Wightwick, Esq. of Dunstan Hall. A whim of his, gratified at an expense of £50. for dress alone, induced him to play the Earl of Essex, supported by the Southampton of Captain Jordan. As stage-manager I had the pleasure to give them some instruction ; and in return Mr. Wightwick honoured me with many tokens of his esteem. I participated in the elegancies of the hall, over which, at that time, his sister, Mrs. Lord, presided, with a graceful affability that characterized her every action ; and on my last benefit, the following season, he made me a princely present of his Essex's dress. Since then he has become the Benedict of real life ; and the ambition for amateur fame abjured, I may boast of witnessing his first performance and his last. Essex is not a favourable character for a first appearance ; the declamation is heavy, and the action of the scene requires experience to give it effect ; yet Mr. Wightwick ably surmounted all the difficulties, and “held his bearing bravely to the end.” I can also speak of Captain Jordan's Southampton in terms of commendation, notwithstanding the critic of the Chronicle was silent on his merits ; though subsequently he lauded to the skies the emasculate Lord Ogleby of the Amateur of Fashion ; thereby adding another proof of the partiality of the press. This amateur of fashion, on my first season in Wolverhampton, perpetrated Macbeth in white silk stockings, and a black Spanish hat and white ostrich feathers ; but the fashionable

and I have heard that many Sunday dinners have been sacrificed to provide a shilling for the play ; and as a pleasure in intellectual amusements can only be felt by well-constituted minds, so the “ third estate” in Ashby are the most civil, and best informed, of their class in life. To be sure example does much ; and in the excellent families of the Piddocks, the Mammetts, and the Beavingtons, are irresistible incentives to the encouragement of taste and good-will to mankind. One choice spirit, my hospitable friend Cape, though not “ native,” is second to none in those qualities which do honour to the head and heart ; for his disposition to oblige keeps pace with his ability to appreciate his fellows by the standard of the mind. It is astonishing that people, divided by a space less than twelve miles, should be the very antipodes of each other in courtesy and rudeness ; yet such is the fact, as it relates to the inhabitants of Ashby and Loughborough, the place of our next unfortunate destination. Actors emphatically repeat the old iterative distich—

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amateurs in this town have all unique ideas of costume : for I saw the first act of Alexander in a private theatre, when, (after their fashionable pronunciation,) *High-fist-on* (Hyphæstion)—*Lies-he-make-us* (Lysimachus)—*Cast-under* (Cassander)—*Clit-us* (Clytus)—and *Polly-Firkin* (Polypherchon)—appeared with all the naked majesty of bare arms ! They, however, may plead a legitimate example in excuse ; for a celebrated deceased actor, in his strolling days, being without fleshings, or cash to buy them, laid on his legs and arms a coating of *black paint*, and in this guise went on for the Moor, Othello. “ Talking of rhubarb,” as Quotem says, “ puts me in mind of physic.” So, talking of Othello, puts me in mind of the African Roscius, who, by the bye, is an *American* black. Many clever critiques have been written on this man’s performance, to which his deserts gave the rare stamp of truth. But he did nothing in this country ; though, as a rational novelty, he undoubtedly had better claims on public wonder than the semi-rationality of the dog, Carlo—the bear, Bruin—or the elephantic elegance of Madamoiselle D’Jeck, who drew crowded houses.

making my authority subservient to their success ; but I never compromised the consequence of the management, the respectability of the company, or my own dignity. On the contrary, whatever was my private opinion, I sternly insisted my manager and his arrangements were the most liberal in the kingdom, and his company unequalled out of London ; and no doubt, by many who could not estimate my motives, I have been thought either a fool or madman. Out of this feeling arose my difference with Miss Foote ; and she never forgave my insisting that I had a better knowledge than she of the capabilities of the manager—actors—fiddlers—stage-carpenters—scenery—and gas-lights.

This year of my life was less eventful than any previous or succeeding, in a professional sense ; but a third increase of my family added to my cares and travelling expenses. My Thespian ardour was, however, unabated ; and instead of being lets to my ambition, my youngsters stimulated me to greater exertions. Children are *not* blessings to actors ; for accustomed to see their parents in fictitious characters, their young minds, unable to distinguish between the real and assumed, become suspicious of deceit ; and confidence once destroyed, affection cannot be felt. Before reason can eradicate the impressions of childhood, parent and child are thrown on the dangerous field of professional rivalry, where jealousy ever prevents a “union of hearts.” I have observed that the children of low comedians entertain little or no respect for their fathers. My children’s visits to the theatre were very rare ; and those were curtailed

after my eldest boy remarked on my Macaire “I don’t love my father now—he is a murderer!” The son of a particular friend of mine saw me in Massinger’s Luke; and on his return home he said, with great earnestness, “Papa, I wonder you like that Mr. Dyer, he is such a hypocrite!” “Children are a poor man’s riches,” says the proverb; but they are not an actor’s, not even when they are employed as benefit auxiliaries; for the public may be *fashioned*, or *talked*, or *surprized*, but never *paraded* into charity. I knew an actor whose numerous progeny entirely filled the *dramatis personæ* of Bombastes Furioso, and who invariably put them as a puff-advertisement in his bill; yet his receipts never exceeded the common average. When my vicissitudes sent me through the country, a Sylvester Daggerwood, with “a wife and five small children,” I produced them as reasons for my wanderings; but I doubt whether they helped my interests. Some managers have an utter aversion to family-men; and one, with whom I passed many pleasant months, long hesitated to engage me, because he thought *three children* must make me necessitous, and increase my weight of luggage beyond his allowance to performers. That honest-hearted woman, the head of the Worcester theatre, was the very reverse of my Nottingham friend. Her ideas were truly patriotic, and she esteemed that couple most worthy of her regard, who contributed the greatest portion to her country’s wealth—its population. This lady is a very John Bull in petticoats. In the beginning days of her management, she occasionally played the old women of comedy; for which her handsome face,

and splendid rotundity of figure, fitted her admirably ; but study confused her ; and though she always retained the substance of her character, her best friends could never accuse her of being *letter-perfect*. Mrs. Hardcastle says “ Ay, this all proceeds from your *novel* ideas.” My friend recollects something about “ *novel*,” and she said “ Ay, you fancy yourself a very good “ *novel reader*.” Mrs. Mingle says, “ What the devil does my husband keep calling for me, when he knows I am up to my elbows making the *necessary* arrangements ?” My friend rendered the speech “ What the devil does my husband keep calling for me *for*, when he knows I am up to my elbows in a *necessary* ?”

SEVENTH YEAR.

— “A seventh? I'll see no more
And yet the eighth appears” * * * “What, is this so!—
SHAKSPEARE.

AGAIN in Ashby, happy in the society of old, and cheered by the approbation of new friends, from whom I parted with a painful presentiment that I should never more appear before them,—a presentiment not strictly verified, though, as stage-manager, my duties were no more employed in their service. Nothing of greater moment occurred this season than the appearance of Miss Foote on our first, and the patronage of the Marquis of Hastings on our last, night of performance. In July we visited Worcester, for the races; in August, Wolverhampton; and returning to the city, we remained there until September, assisted by amateurs, Mathews

and Yates, Miss Love, and Miss Paton. So much has been said of the Damon and Pythias of Monologues, it fortunately renders my notice of them quite unnecessary ; for I confess my inability to form an opinion on their individual merits : but when Mr. Yates told a playhouse god, who interrupted him, that there was only “ one fool at a time allowed in the house,” I had no hesitation on whom to fix the cap and bells. Nor did I dissent from Mathews, when he interrupted his colleague’s imitation, by saying “ That is not a bit like me.”

The Paton, protected by her then noble husband, Lord Lennox, drew overflowing houses for two nights ; and charmed me as much by her *simplicity*, as the melody of her voice. How equally are the gifts of nature apportioned to frail humanity. There is ever some bar to perfection ; for the possession of an accomplishment is always counterpoised by some defect. Hence it is, that *singers*, *dancers*, and *fiddlers*, with few exceptions, are noted for their mental imbecility. What but a weakness, bordering on fatuity, could induce Miss Paton to connect herself with Wood ? As the wife of Lord Lennox she was pitied and admired ;—as the wife of Wood she is still admired—but suspected. Luckily for her, a British audience (to its shame) ever has been indulgent to moral delinquents. (30)

September I made my first bow to the "proud Salopians," as Sir Edward Mortimer. The banquet hall of Llewellyn, the last Prince of Wales, had for many years been used as a theatre ; and within its massive walls, built for the use of ages, we prepared for our opening campaign. However, Bennett uselessly expended a considerable sum in decorations ; for on the Saturday preceding our announced night, the magistrates positively refused to sanction the performance in the hall of Llewellyn, on the plea of the building being insecure. Some few years previously, in the night, a portion of the roof fell off on an adjoining house, and killed several persons ; but the damage of property was repaired, and the security of the theatre not doubted, until the fate of the Brunswick put the authorities in fear for the safety of his Majesty's liege play-going people ; and inspectors were employed to report on Shrewsbury, and all other theatres. The report being adverse to Bennett's seeming interest, he then took the *Circus*, by the Welsh bridge ; and an extraordinary dispatch in removing cheese and butter from the ring, enabled him to receive his friends on the Tuesday evening. Here we remained until Christmas ; and here Miss Foote and Macready were better followed than I ever remember them elsewhere. Whatever the Salopians may have been, *pride* is not now their characteristic ; politeness certainly abounds ; and the courteous attention received from all was truly gratifying. Crisp, whose judgment had the experience of years, confirmed my favourable opinion ; and whilst speaking of Shrewsbury, he mentioned as a curious circumstance, that on

his last benefit, the *three kings* in Richard III. were played by *three managers*—Bunn (Richard)—Decamp (Richmond)—Crisp (Henry).

The Wolverhampton season commenced a fortnight earlier than usual, with Macready's Virginius—followed by his Othello—and William Tell; and I remember his astonishment at the apathy of the audience was overwhelming. “Are they always like this, Dyer!” he inquired, after one of his splendid scenes had passed off with lukewarm applause. “Always,” I replied, “unless you tear a passion to tatters.” In fact this audience is as dull as it is singular in its taste. One of the principal patrons would not see Macready play Othello, because of an aversion to all plays in which men ill-treat their wives! Wood and his dogs succeeded the great tragedian;—then the Fashionable Amateur, in Lord Ogleby;—then Ching Lau Laura, the conjuror;—and finally Miss Foote.

malice, in all their annoying varieties. Ned Grayling was a decided *hit* with me in Worcester, and the piece was loudly called for ; yet Bennett did not repeat it, though he knew the house would be well attended.

In March we returned to Worcester ; and in succession Wood and his dogs, Macready, and Miss Foote, went through their usual routine of parts. The period of my stay with Bennett now drew to a close. For some time a coolness had arisen between us, and a separation was unavoidable. To the last moment, however, my duties were faithfully discharged ; nor did I betray the least pique towards those individuals who first threw the torch of discord between us ; but it distressed me that the peace and good-will of a company should be destroyed by specious machinations. My parting from my Worcester friends was indeed a painful triumph ;—I saw around me those who for two successive years had held me in their esteem without a rival ;—I heard their applauding cheers ;—and whilst the tear of gratitude trembled in my eye, I felt the proud consciousness of striving, at least, to deserve their approbation. My entrance, as Alexander, called forth a deafening acclaim ; and at my *death* a loud cry arose for my appearance. Will it be believed, that the manager forbade my receiving this honour—that authority could lend itself to the pitifulness of envy, and dare to step between the wishes of his patrons, and their favourite ? I punished his interference by delaying my acknowledgments until the end of the performance ; and in the interim he suffered the extreme mortification of finding my friends were not to be driven from their

purpose by delay. In remembrance of this proud evening, the sonnet on my Rienzi, and an appending note, were printed and extensively circulated amongst my friends and admirers.

“ SONNET,
ADDRESSED TO ROBERT DYER,
On his Rienzi.

I saw thee DYER, in the mimic scene,
When fierce Rienzi's spirit lived in thee,
And the old Roman seemed as he had been
A creature of this time ;—so vividly
The people's tribune was by thee pourtrayed ;
Thou wert Rienzi, when thy spirit broke
From the dark guise in which design arrayed
The settled purpose,—till thy fire awoke
The slumbering energies of Rome, to be
“ Queen of the World,” the beautiful, the free !
Thou wert Rienzi, when the father smiled,
And chid, and kissed, and blessed his one sweet child ;
Thine was the tyrant's scorn, the patriot's pride,
You lived Rienzi, and Rienzi died !”

“ Mr. Dyer took his Farewell Benefit of the Worcester audience, on Wednesday, the 5th of May, 1829, in Alexander and Rolamo. The house was fully attended ; and the regret felt at his departure was expressed by a unanimous call for him at the fall of the curtain. He appeared, and received in the loudly applauding cheers of his friends, a proud proof of the admiration created by his talent as an actor.”

took a last farewell of a Worcester audience, Mr. Dyer having obtained a more advantageous engagement elsewhere. Mr. Dyer's merits as an actor, as well as gentlemanly manners and deportment off the stage, have obtained him many friends here; and whose hearty good wishes will attend both him and Mrs. D. on their departure."

Not less gratifying was the subscription entered into by the ladies and gentlemen of the theatre, for the purpose of presenting me a dress sword, with an inscription expressive of their regard; and though managerial influence, and individual malice, frustrated the intention, it could not deprive me of the proud satisfaction of knowing I was beloved and respected. The sword was ordered and the inscription in the hands of Kenneday, the manufacturer, at Birmingham; when a person, who, from his known enmity, had not been asked to join the subscription, informed Bennett of the circumstance, and he immediately discharged my good friend Hazelton, for *daring* to propose such a recognition of my merits; and in less than three months all my friends were expelled the theatre. Wanting more than their means for individual necessities, the subscriptions could not be paid; and Kenneday lost the sale of a splendid sword! (31) Bennett laughed at my supposed disappointment; and I pitied the man who could not understand that the thief who stole the jewelled George, did not, by that act, also rob its possessor of knighthood's honour. Fortunately, Hazelton suffered nothing from his attachment to me; for I immediately obtained his engagement in a company under my control, which secured him from inconvenience, though by no means equal to his deserts; yet we passed

three happy months together, and he then went to the Nottingham theatre, and became deservedly eminent. Since then my friend has gone on increasing in reputation daily, and I feel assured, that sooner or later, his superior talent and gentlemanly conduct will establish him in comfort and independence.

All my applications for engagements having failed, I determined on "*A journey to London*," to see what fortune would do for me amongst the *magnates* of my profession. The remark of a celebrated comedian, who met me on my arrival, annihilated my few hopes at once ; for I had no interest with _____ or managers ; and he told me without them I should do nothing ; but I never had been sanguine as to the result, and therefore I felt no mortification in returning again to the country.

There were three agents, who professed to procure provincial actors situations in the London theatres ; and being introduced to Kenneth, of Bow-Street, as the man all-sufficient, I neglected calling on the honest Smythson, or the far-famed Synis, the presiding deity of the "barp office." Kenneth first proposed my playing at the Cobourg theatre ; but I had a strong dislike to the minors, and I refused. He then arranged two meetings with Charles Kemble, which, he neglecting to attend, Kenneth immediately went down to Drury-Lane, and fixed an interview with Price and Cooper, for the next day. Accident prevented my being in time, and a message was left requesting my presence the following day ; when we met, and I went through the mockery of a rehearsal in a scene of Gambia, and a scene of Macbeth,

with Mr. Cooper for my Zelinda, and Lady Macbeth, and the lessee, my agent, an under prompter, and two or three idlers, as my judges. It has been a matter of wonder to me ever since, how I submitted to this humiliation ; for I had resisted the attempt to appoint another time for our meeting, by giving them the alternative of seeing me then, or not at all ; and I can only account for it by an indifference as to the issue, when I perceived the luke-warmness of my reception. Price, if he did not understand my apathy, must have thought me a vile impostor. Cooper, on conducting me through the intricacies of the scenery, said “I am afraid you will not find your way *out*.” “Oh,” I replied, “the only difficulty here is to find the way *in*.” An acute friend ever advised against my going to London, until my services were *wanted* ; and perhaps, had I delayed, advantageous terms might have been made, for my reputation evidently gained me the interview with Price at my own time ; when (on the authority of my agent) many actors, with powerful recommendations, had waited for months, and were still waiting to get speech with him. On the whole, I rejoice I was not wanted. I am happy that my kinder fortune had better things in store for me, than a collision with the interests of London actors, and a participation in the debaucheries of London theatres. My limited stay in town, and hurried visits to the theatres, unfit me for a critical dissertation on metropolitan acting ; but my impressions were by no means favourable, as I looked in vain for a mediocrity of talent amongst the subordinates ; and without efficient aid from them, the efforts of the

most eminent lost half their power. Except in the magnificence of the houses, the splendour of dress and decorations, and the transcendent merit of two or three in each line of the drama, London theatricals are infinitely inferior to provincial ; and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that the inferior members of a barn are better than their fellows in the minor theatres ; and the secondaries of the major are excelled by those of Bath, Dublin, &c. I saw Kemble in Romeo, and Young and Miss Phillips in Rienzi, with great pleasure ; but the nurse of Mrs. Davenport, and Liston, Farren, Miss Love, and Miss Tree, in Charles XII. have the chief place in my gratified recollection.

Finding a longer stay in London useless, I tore myself from the society of my dear friends, Liddell and Symons, whose brotherly attention made my visit truly delightful, and returned at the end of ten days to my family in Worcester, and made preparations for entering on the most profitable of all my engagements, though it brought me again to the theatres-rural, with all their primitive comforts. Mildenhall, the manager of this little scheme, having more money than he knew what to do with, embarked on a Thespian speculation, and lost his all. He was a worthy, clever fellow ; and when our intimacy commenced, he filled the duties of artist in the Worcester theatre. He sang sweetly—acted low comedy nearly as well as he painted—and beside, had a happy facility in writing songs and dramas of a local or temporary nature. I liked him much, and he reciprocated my esteem so warmly, that he insisted, in my profession I was second

but to the two mighty masters, Kean and Macready. He left Bennett with me, for London, when he made proposals contingent on my fate in the great city, which I accepted, and thus laid the foundation of many months of happiness. Mildenhall is very near-sighted, and some of his friends having complained that he passed them without notice, to prevent such charges of neglect ever after, he nodded indiscriminately to all he passed, to the great amusement of those acquainted with the infirmity of his nature. An imperfection of sight or hearing occasions the most whimsical mistakes. I knew a young man, a mere tyro, whose imperfection of vision was distressing, especially in the glare of lamp-light ; he could not distinguish the side entrances, and scarcely a night passed without an encounter between him and the wings. But he was a dangerous combatant ; for heedless of the consequence he could not foresee, his cuts were like Mildenhall's nods, indiscriminate ; and he has terrified many an expert swordsman by his preparatory observation of "Never mind me, Sir, only take care of yourself, for I can't see where I cut." The imperfection of hearing is still more afflicting. Lloyd, a septagenarian actor, who could hardly hear a cannon's roar, much less the grasshopper's song, (32) depended on the motion of the lips for his cue. On one occasion he rehearsed the Physician to Macready's Macbeth ; and the tragedian at the conclusion of the speech "that preys about the heart," continued speaking in an under-tone on the business of the scene. At last, surprized that the old gentleman did not reply "Therein the patient must

minister to himself," he inquired " Does Mr. Lloyd know I have given the cue?" When his daughter bawled in his ear " Father, do you know Mr. Macready has given you the cue?" " No, my dear," said he, " but when Mr. Macready's mouth is shut, then I know it's my time to go on." Perhaps it is needless to say that Lloyd did not *play* the Physician.

"THE WILD MEANDERINGS OF THE BEAUTEOUS WYL."

ROSS,

"—— thy charms all hearts confess'd,
 Thy peaceful walks, thy hours of rest
 And contemplation. Here the mind,
 (Its usual luggage left behind,) Feels all its dormant fires revive,
 And sees 'the *Man of Ross*' alive."

WILTON CASTLE.

"DE WILTON 's here, of mighty name
 The whelming flood, the summer stream,
 Mark'd from their towers.—The fabric falls,
 The rubbish of their splendid halls
 Time in his march hath scatter'd wide,
 And blank oblivion strives to hide."

PENCRAIG WOOD,

"Whose bold green summit welcome bade,
 Then rear'd behind his nodding shade.

GOODRICH CASTLE.

"—— bold, impressive, and sublime,
 Gleam'd all that's left by storms and time
 Of GOODRICH TOWERS. The mould'ring pile
 Tells noble truths,—but dies the while.
 O'er the steep path, through brake and brier,
 His batter'd turrets still aspire,
 In rude magnificence. 'Twas here
 LANCASTRIAN HENRY spread his cheer,
 When came the news that HAL was born,
 And MONMOUTH hail'd th' auspicious morn.

EIGHTH YEAR.

“ I have done the state some service.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ VAIN pomps and glories of the world, I hate ye,” I exclaimed, when I entered the Ross theatre ; and felt that an extraordinary portion of fortitude was necessary to the endurance of its miserable dimensions, rendered, no doubt, more apparent, by the remembrance of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden ; but, by persuading myself that I did hate the pomps and glories of the theatrical world, I became at last reconciled to their opposites. Besides, Ross is in a beautiful neighbourhood ; and the season of blossoms and flowers was ripening into fruit and seeds, and I felt content in my station, by thinking my peregrination a summer pleasure excursion ! And pleasant it was on the banks of the Wye, to wander amidst those scenes which the rustic muse of Bloomfield has so vividly described.

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COURTFIELD.

“ For RUEDEAN Spire and BISHOP’s Wood,
 The fair domains of COURTFIELD made
 A paradise of mingled shade
 Round BICKNOR’s tiny church, that cowers
 Beneath his host of woodland bowers.

But who the charms of words shall fling
 O’er RAVEN CLIFF, and COLDWELL Spring,
 To brighten the unconscious eye,
 And wake the soul to ecstacy ?

MR. WARRE’S MONUMENT.

“ Close on the Bank, and half o’ergrown,
 Beneath a dark wood’s sombrous frown,
 A monumental stone appears
 Of one who, in his blooming years,
 While bathing spurn’d the grassy shore,
 And sunk, ‘midst friends, to rise no more.
 By parents witness’d.—Hark !—their shrieks !
 The dreadful language horror speaks !

COLDWELL ROCKS.

“ HAIL ! COLDWELL Rocks ; frown, frown away ;
 Thrust from your woods your shafts of grey :
 Fall not, to crush our mortal pride,
 Or stop the stream on which we glide.
 Our lives are short, our joys are few,
 But, giants, what is time to you ?

SYMMON’S YAT.

“ —— enjoy the view,
 Where the fresh gales of summer blew.
 The gleaming WYE, that circles round
 Her four-mile course, again is found ;
 And, crouching to the conqueror’s pride,
 Bathes his huge cliffs on either side ;
 Seen at one glance, when from his brow
 The eye surveys twin gulfs below.

MONMOUTH.

“ TROY HOUSE, and BEAUFORT’s bowers of green.”

“ Mark the bold KYMIN’s sunny brow,
Lifted a'main, with giant power,
E’en to the clouds his NAVAL TOWER ;
Proclaiming to the morning sky
Valour, and fame, and victory.

LANDOGA.

“ Delightful village ! one by one,
Thy climbing dwellings caught the sun.
So bright the scene, the air so clear
Young Love and Joy seem’d station’d there.”

TINTERN ABBEY.

“ And forward on the lowland shore,
Silent, majestic ruins, wore
The stamp of holiness.”

“ Sudden the change ; at once to tread
The grass-grown mansions of the dead !
Awful to feeling, where, immense,
Rose ruin’d, gray magnificence ;
The fair-wrought shaft all ivy-bound,
The towering arch with foliage crown’d,
That trembles on its brow sublime,
Triumphant o’er the spoils of time.

“ — beetling PERSFIELD’s fairy ground.”—
“ Stupendous WIND-CLIFF.”—“ The rude Apostles.”—
“ Rock-founded CHEPSTOW’s mouldering pride.”

RAGLAND CASTLE.

“ Majestic RAGLAND !—Harvest’s wave
Where thund’ring hosts their watch-word gave,
When Cavaliers, with downcast eye,
Struck the last flag of loyalty.”

All this I saw, and the unpleasantry of the night was forgot when morning gave me power to look on the rich prospect, and find "health in the breeze, and freshness in the stream." Chance enabled Mildenhall to collect a very respectable company together; but we were not attractive in Ross, though he dramatized the *Life of John Kyrle*, (33) and produced his pathetic tragedy of the *Red Barn*. Scarcely had we been a week in this town, when I received an offer, through the agent, Kenneth, of the stage-management of the Brighton theatre, subject, however, to conditions that made me decline it. Subsequently the offer was renewed and accepted, but the delicate state of my wife's health made a separation from her impossible; and I gave up the chance of immediate celebrity for the sake of domestic comfort. Ledbury made ample amends for the failure of Ross; the houses, after the first night, were well filled by those whose critical taste made their applause an honour. It would extend my work beyond its due limits to record the names of all those who have claims on the distinction; therefore I must be content with an acknowledgment of my deep obligation to John Higgins, Esq. and his amiable lady, for by them my interests were principally promoted. Rich in the possession of highly cultivated minds, and blessed in the power of dispensing happiness, their wealth is only valuable to them as the means of administering to the wants of their poorer fellow creatures—encouraging genius by their liberality—and giving a tone to the elegance of society by their example. Long may they live to bless and be blessed. I am proud to mention

that admirable artist, Mr. Thomas Ballard, as my friend. He is an honour to his native town, and bids fair to hold a place amongst the first painters of his country. But my connexion with the excellent family of the Grundy's was the chief source of my private pleasures, and—the severest affliction that ever fell on the heart of friendship ; but I will not anticipate—a succeeding chapter shall contain my tale of affliction. I have now only to dwell on the thoughts of past joy and happiness. We parted from Ledbury as from our home, and then visited Monmouth, the birth-place of our “fifth Harry,” and my second girl ; and I found it scarcely second to Ledbury in taste and liberality. It abounds with, and is surrounded by families of rank and fortune, whose patronage is freely bestowed on the deserving. At the time I now speak of, John Rolls, Esq. of Bryanstone-Square, resided at Wonastow, and took the lead in supporting our theatre ; and few nights passed that his beautiful daughters did not grace our boxes by their presence ; and youth and loveliness, like theirs, would have given fashion to a far less talented company than ours. Mr. Rolls and his family distinguished me by their attention ; and expressed their regard for my welfare by patronizing my wife's benefit, though my night had been honoured by their presence ; and a handsome *douceur* confirmed his favourable opinion. A. Wyatt, Esq. W. Vaughan, Esq. J. Jones, Esq. and Mr. and Mrs. Buck, were also our most liberal country patrons ; whilst the town gave us no less generous friends in the respected families of John Price, Esq. Dr. Bevan, J. Tyler, Esq. Mr. Norton, and

Dr. Wilson ; and a host of intimates have a place in my affectionate remembrance. The language of truth is always uniform, and so are the sentiments of cultivated minds. Bernard, in his Recollections has this passage--

“ I told his Royal Highness, that I thought he condescended greatly in taking such an interest in my fortunes. ‘ Not at all Bernard,’ he replied, ‘ if I condescend to enjoy your talents, I certainly may condescend to reward them :—the fact is I consider myself in your debt for a certain sum of gratification, and I wish to balance the account by doing you as much service as lies in my power.’ ”

On my second visit to Monmouth Dr. Wilson, in reply to my acknowledgments for his continued countenance, expressed himself in nearly the same words ; he said “ I have very often experienced great pleasure from your masterly displays of passion. I am your debtor for much intellectual enjoyment, and it is my imperative but pleasing duty to return that obligation, by advancing your interests, and showing you every possible attention.”

The theatre not being ready for us at the time fixed, I had an opportunity to be of service to my friend, Miss Penley, by going over to Cheltenham, and playing Wallace and Tekeli for her benefit, with a company whose proper sphere was a barn ; for a more wretched set, with the exception of Cooke and Wilton, never violated the drama’s sacred laws. Yet these actors were tolerated by the audience of a fashionable watering place, though, certainly, the fashionables, who go, not to see, but to be seen, deserve none better than such as Sir David Dunder calls “ Players—pokers—as dull as h—— and as flat as

the dresser." I most sincerely believe the decline of the stage may be attributed to that indifference of the public which really will not take the trouble to censure ; for actors are like school-boys, who require the rod of correction to stimulate their energies. There is a natural vanity in our dispositions, which swells the breath of applause a thousand fold ; and picturing apathy as respectful attention, a self-approbation confirms the actor in bad habits—when a hiss, judiciously applied, would convince him that improvement was necessary. Actors never think the laugh against themselves. A clever amateur once played with a professional, whose lisping imperfection of speech elicited the mirth of the audience. " What are they laughing at ? " asked the terrified amateur. " You, my boy, you," said the actor, " You speak so bad—you speak so bad—only speak like me, and then they wouldn't *s'quiz* you."

As if to impress the mind with the uncertainty of sub-lunary comfort, we met a most mortifying reception at Chepstow, where the miserable shifts of a set of unfortunate strollers had left such a stigma on the name of player, that we were looked on with a painful suspicion. Every door was closed against us ; and for the first time I felt ashamed of my profession. One person, deceived I suppose by my appearance, agreed to accommodate my family ; but the instant I explained myself, she broke from her agreement, and compelled me to seek for shelter elsewhere. At last, as an especial favour, and then only on condition that I always paid a week in advance, the proprietor of a lodging-house, where pack-men—itinerant

musicians — Savoyards — broom-girls — match-sellers — white mice and monkeys — found harbour, consented to admit us ; and in this *respectable apartment* we continued through the season—at the commencement, by compulsion, but at last in derision ; for when we became known as responsible persons, we might have quitted our miscellaneous fellow lodgers for more congenial associates, but would not. Humiliations are the portion of actors in general, and as mine commenced in Chepstow, I left it with extreme satisfaction ; nor did I bear with me one pleasurable remembrance. Newport seemed a Paradise by comparison, though here a chilling reserve made us feel our littleness in public estimation ; but there were individual cases of much courtesy. Thomas Prothero, Esq. and Thomas Powell, Esq. of the Gear, evinced a consideration for me that has my grateful thanks ; and the former extended his kindness, by giving me introductions to his friends in Usk, the place of our next degradation. I had suffered with patience the misery of a Chepstow season, and the lukewarmness of Newport, from the regard I entertained for Mildenhall's interest ; but Usk and its horrors filled up the measure of my endurance, and I determined to bear no more. Besides, I had not now the negative pleasure of being miserable in good company, for he permitted his respectable actors to leave him, and supplied their place by “fellows of no mark or likelihood,” who offended me as much by their foul linen as their paucity of talent. I do not estimate a man by the style, but the neatness of his apparel. A dirty layer is ever a sot and a bad actor ; (34) and I valued

the man who lay abed whilst his solitary shirt was being washed, and gave as a reason for its holiness, that it fell down from the line where it was drying, and so broke—though he detained me at rehearsal an hour beyond my usual time. Before we parted I received this letter from Mildenhall :—

“ My dear Sir,

“ To your gentlemanly conduct, and high talent, has the success, at all times it has occurred in the concern, been chiefly attributable. To your friendship I am indebted for smoothing many rough passages in my way ; and my sole regret is that in a short time I may have to shake your hand, accompanied by a farewell, perhaps not soon to meet again. At any rate your conduct, your talent, and friendship, shall not be forgotten, although I can only testify by words the high sense I entertain of each. That I may see you fill a station, worthy of your worth and talents, would give me infinite satisfaction ; and to speak I hope prophetically, I have no doubt but I shall enjoy the knowledge of your advancement.”

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ T. MILDENHALL.”

Thursday, May 6th, 1830.

If he persevered in maintaining the consequence of his company, no change of fortune should have sundered us ; but my future expectancies were in hazard by an association with men, whom to know “ was a vice.” We parted then in perfect good-will with each other ; and I most heartily grieve at the unfortunate termination of his management.

The number of petty managers who infest all parts of this country are incalculable, and of course, the number of persons employed by them is proportionably great ;

given a sufficiency to buy a “farthing rush-light.” Under such managers actors are thrown on the public commis-
seration, and if one spark of pride or good feeling is previously entertained, the sense of humiliating depen-
dance extinguishes it, and they become adepts in solicitation. In closing this chapter I must acknowledge the patronage I received from many highly respectable families; but unpleasing thoughts have the ascendancy in my recollections of Usk.

but they only increase the eleemosynary population, and do no service to society either by their industry or example. For such persons the tread-mill has no terrors, because they boldly enter towns where the cautionary notice is displayed, that “ All vagrants found begging in this borough will be apprehended.” I never encountered but one manager of the speculative class, and he had engaged an expensive company without the means to pay his first week’s salaries ; and finally left his tradesmen and performers to regret their connexion with a swindler. The miseries of a sharing scheme, the lowest of all theatrical speculations, never fell to my lot ; but they have been described to me in most lively colours. A person who is in possession of sundry scenes and dresses calls himself a manager, and fits up a theatre. He then collects his adventurers, and the probable receipts are agreed to be shared amongst them. Out of each night’s receipts the expense of rent, printing, and lighting, is first taken ; and the remainder is divided in equal shares, six of *which* go to the liquidation of the stock debt—FOUR to the manager—and ONE each to the company. This *stock debt*, incurred for the original outlay, is never acknowledged to be paid by the manager, as in fact it constitutes his authority ; for a contumacious actor is made obedient when the *stock debt* is advanced as a justifiable reason for withholding the supplies. Every thing is shared after the performance ; the very candle-ends are objects of competition ; and many a luckless wight has gone “ in darkness” to bed, when a long exhibition has burnt down the candles to a wick, and the share of profits has not

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NINTH YEAR.

“ Nay then, farewell !
I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness ;
And, from that full meridian of my glory,
I haste now to my setting.”

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN I left Mildenhall I had no other engagement, and my trunks were packed, and every arrangement made for a short sojourn at Newport ; but the day before our intended departure, a letter came to me bearing the ominous superscription of “ Nicks,” with an offer for our services in the Carmarthen theatre ; and with the old proverb for my instructor, and the advice of a friend on the spot, I accepted the terms of *Mr. Nicks*, though his name almost deterred me. On the day we started there was no coach between Usk and Abergavenny, and being pledged to join Mr. Nicks on the day following, necessity compelled me to a journey “ *en militaire* ” for the ten

miles. Mrs. Dyer and the children were mounted on our luggage, whilst I walked after the cart as a rear-guard. On the road Mrs. Dyer and our infant child had a miraculous escape from instant death ; and even now a thrill of horror at their danger is participant with gratitude for their preservation. The passing of a carriage diverted her attention for a moment, and a sudden jerk of the cart threw her from her seat, with her child under her, on the ground. I expected no less than to raise them dead in my arms, but the girl was unhurt, and her mother suffered but little.

My first interview with Mr. Nicks confirmed my anticipations. The gentleman was an adventurer, and our only chance of salary lay in the success of his speculation ; and fortunately for myself and others, my efforts gave a respectability to his establishment, otherwise we should have suffered to a greater extent than we did. We passed more than two months in Carmarthen, and found much pleasure amongst our Welsh friends, who, like the natives of Cornwall, are emulous to show kindness to the stranger ; but we were most indebted to the urbanity and goodness of the amiable Mrs. Bouchier, for our more felicitous hours in Carmarthen. She honoured my wife by her notice, and to the last moment of our stay in South Wales, continued her courteous attention. For some months I had been in correspondence with the well-known Manley, the manager of the Nottingham theatre ; but his objections to married people and children were very powerful, and though he "believed my services would be an acquisition," he declined them because

of my family. At last I received a letter from him beginning “ Dear Sir—I am satisfied—you may come;” and to the surprise of the theatrical world, he engaged me for the united duties of his stage-manager and first tragedian. I joined his company at Retford; and I hold my meeting with this most gentlemanly relic of the old school of managers, amongst the agreeable reminiscences of my professional life. Brunton, Lee, Manley, and Smith of Norwich, are cotemporary. The two first have passed in review before me, and I have done them no more than justice in my eulogies. Smith was my last manager, and of him I shall speak hereafter; but Manley has in all things the superiority as a manager, though as an actor he is vastly inferior to Brunton, nor takes precedence of Smith or Lee. Judgment, assisted by experience—passion, tempered by judgment—and a pride in instruction—unite in making him the best master under whom a novice can learn his profession; and even his irascible temper is an advantage, in that it gives an earnestness to his opinions. Many a timid amateur (and a timid man never makes an actor) has been frightened away by his violence; whilst a turbulent spirit, awed into subjection and correction of the errors of self-conceit, has become a better artist. Manley’s pride in the reputation of his performers is an admirable trait in his character. “ It is all very fine, Sir,” he said to a distinguished *star*, “ It’s all very fine, Sir; yet you see they don’t care for you!—but only mark how my boys will bring it down in the farce! ” An old lady being questioned on the absence of *potatoes* from her table, replied “ I have banished

that vegetable from my house long since ! When my servants ate potatoes they did nothing but quarrel ;—they are now the most peaceable domestics in the world, because—I have forbade the use of potatoes. What is the cause of the rebellions in Ireland ?—Why, potatoes ! What makes the Irish such a passionate, headstrong people ?—the immoderate use of potatoes ! And if government wish to tranquilize that unhappy country, they must entirely forbid the use of potatoes." I am not certain that Manley is a great consumer of this denounced vegetable, but he is an *Irishman* and *impetuous*.

The Nottingham circuit has been under his control for a long series of years ; he is therefore known to all, and the very children calculate on the day of his arrival in each town. I saw a crowd of urchins collected round his carriage at Halifax, and as he alighted they shouted " Ay, Manley, ye'll gie us an order for Munday neet." And in Retford an old acquaintance of his followed us through several streets, with pen, ink, and paper ; and he wrote the expected order for her on the low wall of the church yard. " I am glad to see you, Sir," he said at our first interview, " and I hope you will live to grow grey in my company. Is your luggage come, Sir ? I know you are not like many gentlemen of poetical imaginings, who FANCY they have two or three boxes full of clothes. Your trunks weigh three hundred you say ; and I suppose you will allow me *the honour* to carry them about the country for you ? Did you ever play Douglas in Hannah More's beautiful tragedy of Percy ? No. What ! think it dull ! By God, you young actors

have the strangest notions. Why Sir, I played Douglas, and very well I did it too — and I always carried a particular looking sword; and when I saw the scarf upon Percy's breast, I used to start thus,—and let the sword fall, so that it stuck—stuck—stuck—Sir, in the stage. Bravo, beautiful, cried the audience—that's capital!—that's *real* cut-throat work." To me Manley was ever condescending and kind; and though occasionally we differed in opinion, our harmony was never destroyed by the discord. The opposition of persons for whom he entertained no regard, he never forgave nor forgot; and a rather clever, but a vulgar woman, received her instant discharge for telling him he did not treat her like a gentleman. "Gad's blood, madam, not treat ye like a *gentleman*! Do you say that? You are the first that ever said it, madam. I'm afraid you may find it unpleasant to remain in my company with your delicate and novel notions of good breeding!" One consequence of his favour annoyed me not a little; he insisted on my playing every character he had played, and amongst others, Sir W. Dorillon, John Dory, and Doctor Cantwell! Sir William and John Dory were entirely out of my way; but he silenced all my objections by saying "Why, Sir, I played them, and if I thought them the first parts, depend on it they are so; and as you are my representative, I wouldn't ask you to do anything derogatory." In the *green-room* Manley is a fellow of infinite mirth, though perhaps his best jokes are somewhat of the broadest. However, more than thirty years' connexion with the stage, and its brightest ornaments, have stored him with a rich fund

of theatrical anecdote. He acted before his Majesty George III. at Weymouth, when the farce of the Spoiled Child (a favourite of the King's) was played; and a remarkably masculine woman sustained the character of Miss Pickle. On lighting their Majesties to their carriage the King said to the manager "Very good, very good, Hughes—farce well played—well played!—clever *man* that Miss Pickle—clever man, clever man!" "Man!" exclaimed Hughes, "Your Majesty is deceived, the person who sustained Miss Pickle is Mrs. — a very respectable *woman*!" "No! no! Hughes," rejoined the laughing monarch, "a man, Hughes—a man—a man!" "With all submission," rejoined the astonished manager, "I assure your Majesty Mrs. — is a *woman*!" "It won't do—it won't do, Hughes," continued the delighted sovereign, "a man! Hughes—a man!—hey Charlotte, hey? hey?—clever man, Hughes—saw his beard—saw his beard—his beard!—a man, Hughes, a man!" The next morning Hughes entered the green-room, and addressed the assembled company "Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to tell you their Majesties were much gratified by the performance of last night—much gratified! And (turning to Mrs. — who sat in gigantic dignity in one corner of the room,)—and I am most happy in saying, madam, that his Majesty particularly noticed you!" "God bless the King," exclaimed the delighted lady. "And the Queen also distinguished you," continued Hughes. "Lord, love them," said the lady, "I saw they were looking at me, bless their dear hearts." "Yes," said Hughes, "his Majesty was vastly pleased."

" May the King live for ever," rejoined Mrs. — brightening with smiles. " But his Majesty," proceeded Hughes,— " God bless him," interrupted Mrs. — " His Majesty insists that you are — *a man!* " " The nasty beast," cried Mrs. — as she rose with offended dignity and stalked out of the room.

A journey from Carmarthen to Retford, with four children, in the month of November, was of itself sufficiently harrassing ; but a circumstance at Newark considerably added to our unpleasantries. The outlay for travelling expenses had reduced my finances to *one guinea* and a *sovereign* ; and on alighting in this town (within twenty miles of our destination), I tendered the coachman my sovereign to change for his fee. The fellow went into the bar, and returning pronounced it *bad*. I then offered my *guinea*, which was also refused, and I really believe they suspected me as a passer of base coin ; but my sovereign and guinea were both good. This was the first difficulty I ever encountered whilst travelling. The company at Retford (prepared by the reports of my friend Hazelton) received me with great courtesy ; and the liberal co-operation of Mrs. Manley enabled me to conduct the establishment with an unusual degree of spirit and success. The shortness of our stay in Retford prevented the formation of private friendships ; and Halifax and Stamford are anti-congenial to sociability. Halifax, notwithstanding, has strong claims on my thankful remembrance, for the favour of public opinion, (35) and the support of my benefit, which Manley pronounced the greatest compliment ever paid to any of my predecessors,

Benefits are usually made by a connexion out of the theatre, arising no doubt from the connexion with, but still meanly independent of professional merits ; and hence the system (the only stigma on Manley's company) is pursued in its most debasing form, his actors being pot-house associates, and the companions of any who are likely to take a gallery ticket. I must not be told this system alone ensures success, for my own is a case in point to the contrary—my intimates were never less respectable than myself. I rarely entered a public-house (never with an interested motive), and yet my benefits always equalled, and more frequently exceeded all others. At Stamford the inimitable T. P. Cooke commenced his engagements for that place, Nottingham, and Derby. I had seen many whose sailors were called excellent by good judges, and I anticipated in Cooke's William, &c. a superior modification of the same style ; but he annihilated my previous ideas of nautical perfection, and I wondered a vile imitation of nature ever passed current with me. All sailors, save Cooke, are *land-lubbers*, he is a *son of the sea*, a very amphibious animal ; his hands are used like fins, and he moves on the shore like a fish out of water ; but see him in imagination aboard, and he walks as if the plank and the blue wave were beneath him. Not less efficient, though less natural portraiture, are his Brigand, and Monster ; the Monster being a wonderful embodying of the demon, in the Frankenstein of Mrs. Shelley. One part of this terrible display of pantomimic power is the finest performance ever witnessed—it is where the monster discovers the blindness

of De Lancy, and expresses “ Hideous as I am, I am yet happier than this poor wretch, for I can look on the beautiful sky, and the fields and flowers ! ” (36) My first appearance at Nottingham was in the Easter week, with Cooke, and we then opened at Derby for the season ; where, on the Thursday preceding our arrival, Miss Foote had become the Countess Harrington, and privileged her mother and lap-dog to drive a splendid equipage and four, bearing the coronet of an Earl, in which she “ greatly condescended ” to stop at a huckster shop, in Baxter-Gate, for the purchase of a wooden spoon ! Report said, the noble Earl, with a peacock’s feather in his hat, pursued his honourable dame around the grounds of Alvaston in sportive chace, “ the Apollo and Dian of the grove ; ” and in a moment of despondence he said “ Maria, if the reformers take away my lands, for my support won’t you put on the buckskins and boots, and play the little jockey again ? ” The union is a happy one. Derby is endeared to me by the friendship of one, whose pursuits are directly at variance with his inclinations ; but the time is not far distant when Edward Greatorex shall emerge from his obscurity, and take a distinguished place in the same list with those who boast like Akenside, Burns, and Bloomfield, “ the proud nobility of mind.” The Nottingham audience received me with extreme favour, and throughout the season continued their kindness. (37) The audience of a manufacturing town are strictly critical, and even the poor mechanic in the gallery pretends to judgment, and seeks a gratification beyond sight and sound in a dramatic entertainment.

He has read your author, and understands his beauties ; and it is not unusual to see him with a play-book and candle, following the actor in every line, and ready to convict him in an error. On the performance of Romeo and Juliet, (which in the country generally begins with Mercutio) a critic, with his book and candle, took his place in the front seat of the gallery ; and the moment I made my entrance and began “ See where he steals,” he interrupted me, “ Stop Dyer, you have cut out a scene—I pay to see the whole play, and I will see it, or else have my money back again.” This season introduced me to Miss Smythson and the beautiful Miss Phillips. I had previously seen them both in London, and now my first impressions were confirmed. Miss Smythson is a compound of Kean and Macready, mixed up with three-fourths of mechanical knowledge, and a fourth of genius ; but Miss Phillips is all nature, with an originality in unison with her beauty, which is distinct and unmatched in loveliness. Her Desdemona is a very gem, and stands alone in excellence ; she never can be indifferent, but here she is pre-eminent. There is no voluptuousness (the common error of actresses) in her love for the Moor—she “ saw Othello’s visage in his mind,” and her passion, founded on this line, is the most delicate emanation of feeling imaginable. The ladies of the profession would do well in following the example of Miss Phillips ; and instead of dwelling on what are called the *beauties*, find out and picture the *true features* of a character.

Only on two occasions did I ever resort to auxiliary means for a benefit ; and for my first attempt, in the

shape of a twelfth-cake, raffled for by my supporters in Ross, I have a sense of degradation at this moment. My second attempt had something patriotic about it; and though like the cake it failed, the pride of motive secured me from humiliation. Nottingham, at the time my benefit was announced, appeared to sympathize with the sufferings of our countrymen in the Sister Isle; and as I could not afford a direct subscription, I did all that my power allowed, and headed my bill thus:

“ Mr. Dyer respectfully begs to announce, that feeling in common with all, the necessity of administering to the wants of our fellow-creatures according to our means, he pledges himself to appropriate *one-half* the profits of his benefit to the relief of the starving Irish.”

I should belie myself to assert that *self* had no part in my charitable intentions; but at the same time I must insist on a portion of good feeling. The only direct advantage I derived from this speculation, and that sufficient to atone my pecuniary disappointment, was, my introduction to Thomas Wakefield, Esq. a gentleman who takes the lead amongst his townsmen, as much from the transcendence of his virtues, as the abundance of his wealth. I waited on him as a member of the Irish committee, and at once he entered into my views; yet he foretold a failure, on the ground that the dissenters were the only advocates of the Irish, the cause being unpopular with the public generally. It proved so; my expenses being nearly £4. more than the receipts; but my liberal friend secured me from loss, by discharging the amount.

He said “ You would have done better without the Irish, but this has been our benefit, and the loss must fall on me ! Granted I should not have shared in your profits, still you must waive your objections, and allow me the pleasure not to assist, but to save you from an undeserved loss. Come, you are a family-man, and cannot so well bear a sacrifice as an unencumbered bachelor ! ” and enforcing his wish by similar arguments, I felt as if conferring a favour on, instead of receiving the obligation, from him. This is the test of true philanthropy, and that man possesses a perfection of nature, who bestows a gift without appearing to be a benefactor.

Shortly after our opening in Nottingham I discovered that Manley did not give me a proportionate reward for my services, my salary being only 5s. per week more than several other members of the company received ; and conscious that I deserved no less, I demanded an increase, in default of which I tendered my resignation, and Manley replied

“ Dear Sir,

“ I regret exceedingly that there should exist any cause to part us, the reasons you urge are strong, and they are without a remedy : you know best where the shoe pinches, but decide as you will my respect and good wishes for you shall continue.”

“ Yours, respectfully,

“ T. W. MANLEY.”

Nottingham, 12th June, 1831.

And I left him rather than I would forfeit my opinion of right, or lessen my value by toiling without a just and equitable remuneration. The ninth year of my wanderings

finished here, and I may say my Thespian life ; for my three months' engagement with Smith was only eventful in its consequence, and my excursive entertainment could hardly be called theatrical. It was a bold step to throw myself out of an engagement for the sake of consistency. We had four children dependant on our earnings ; but had they been as many as Priam's, I should have shown the same bearing towards injustice. For three months we remained unemployed, and then I received an offer from Smith, the Norwich manager, to join him at Cambridge ; and leaving my wife and family at Nottingham, I proceeded to the University, buoyant with bright hopes of future greatness.

IMPROVEMENTS ON THE NORWICH COMPANY.

ON MESSRS. S—.

“ Be thou as pure as ice, as chaste as snow,
Thou shalt not 'scape,”—but all the rest you know.
Hold on your course then, let the weak deride,
There 's nought more worthy than becoming pride ;
It awes the ignorant, and it checks the bold,
Whilst sense respects it—though by it controlled.
Hold on your course—but cry “ oh LORD befriend us,
From envy—hatred—malice—oh defend us.”
These will assail you—borne on Faction's wing,
Beware her smile, 'tis deadlier than her sting.
But still hold on, you have a sure defence,
Unblemished honour, honesty, and sense.

“ That which should accompany old age
Is honour, love, obedience, troops of friends ; ”
Thy days are many, in this life’s sad page
Say hast thou yet accomplished these ends ?
No,—stead of honour, thou hast gained contempt ;
Instead of love,—thou hast thy brethren’s hate ;
From all obedience thou art quite exempt,
Thy friends are few,—like hairs upon thy pate.
Oh shame upon thee, yes, a deep black shame,
To keep the tale-bearer, and slanderer’s name ;
To have thy treachery and thy meanness flung
From every good, from every bad-man’s tongue.
Be wise in time, thou grave devoted dust,
Try to be honest—or at least, be just ;
I fain would love thee—’tis my heart’s desire,
But first approve me, that report’s a liar ;
Prove that thy virtues gain thee man’s despite,
That all the world is wrong—and thou art right.

ON L—— AND H——.

Cautious by nature—undefiled by art,
They act the open, but the prudent part ;
Detraction’s course they wisely ever shun,
And do by others as they would be done :
And strongly prove—these brethren of the sod—
“ An honest man ’s the noblest work of God.”

ON B——.

A thing of impudence, and low pretence,
Vulgar in birth, he calls his cunning—sense !
Apes other’s merits, and if praise be shown
Laughs at the dupes, who think that praise his own ;
Yet poorly envious, robs of their good name
From whom he pilfers—though it brings him fame.
Selfish—litigious—sciolistic—vain !
None hope “ to look upon his like again.”

ON H—.

He treads the stage, the chief among the sticks,
The most omniscient, most unknowing H—s.

ON M—.

Lavater says, and what he says is true,
The man that's lean is always envious too ;
Lavater says, the man who shuns your eye
With downcast look, or with a glance awry,
May talk like truth, but yet he means a lie.
Lavater here is not far wrong, I ween,
For M—'s eye evades, and M—'s lean.

ON M—.

Trusted by all, by all suspected,
I'll have for thee a varied doime erected,
Where thou the Janus of the fane shalt rule,
And gain the homage of each knave and fool.
I've thought thee honest, wished what I believed,
But if thou'rt false, how much I am deceived.

ON M—.

Oh M—, M—, a great German sausage,
Is not more full of meat than thou of brains ;
Oh M—, M—, a great German sausage,
Is sweet and sav'ry, sweeter are thy strains.
There must be magic in thy fiddle-bow
That thus on catgut working too and fro
Can bring forth tones, such as from Jubal's lyre
Found echoes only in the heavenly quire.
There's music in thee—music is about thee ;
Breathe, speak, or sing, there's music comes from out thee :
So when you die, not lost with meaner things,
We'll turn your mighty guts to fiddle-strings.

Such was the Norwich company in September 1831. It would be an ungracious task for me to analize farther the merit of men, whose petty intrigues and envy were ever opposed to genuine talent and gentlemanly demeanour. I will therefore but casually remark that I found ignorance, meanness, and arrogance, where I anticipated genius, liberality, and courtesy—those qualities which in by-gone days made the Norwich company respectable. My reception in Cambridge, Bury St. Edmunds, Colchester, and Ipswich, was most favourable, (38) though the characters apportioned me rarely elicited my histrionic powers, for either by chance or design, a good part was a God-send. An unfriendly collision (and I could not be friendly with such men) made our separation necessary; and I closed an engagement with Penley, for the Newcastle theatre, which the breaking out of the fatal cholera alone prevented my fulfilling

Again out of a situation, and again unsuccessful in my applications elsewhere, I returned to Nottingham to press a paternal kiss on the lips of a fifth increase to my lot of youngsters. My situation now became precarious and critical. I had experienced the goodness of my friends during my late three month's vacation, and I could not tax their confidence further; and dismal forebodings of all an actor's miseries haunted me at every turn. Necessity at last suggested to the advocate of the *starving Irish*, the necessity of a benefit for the (likely to be) *starving English*, and I attempted a negotiation for the assistance of the Nottingham amateurs, but they honoured me by not noticing my application. Thrown

then on my own resources, I exemplified the truth of "Whatever is, is right," and "Necessity is the mother of invention," for I compiled an entertainment which made me entirely independent of amateur aid, and which succeeded beyond my warmest expectations. (39) During my stay in Colchester "The Actor's Four Reasons" attracted my notice, and I transcribed it, little thinking that in a few months I should find it available. I could not ask the support of my friends without explaining the cause of my return, and I issued the following bill, which also answered my purpose in every succeeding Town, subject of course to occasional alterations :

THEATRE, NOTTINGHAM.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. DYER, LATE STAGE-MANAGER.

All men are subject to vicissitudes, and it is a pleasing and a proud feeling, when in the hour of trial a man can conscientiously say, my vices, or my undeservings, are not the cause of this—such is the case with Mr. Dyer. He left this theatre for the Norwich circuit, and in Cambridge, Bury, Colchester, and Ipswich, confirmed the favourable opinion entertained of his ability by his kind friends in Nottingham; and in that circuit he might have continued, but he received a more advantageous offer from the manager of the Newcastle theatre, which he accepted, and a prospect of fame and fortune appeared before him, when the afflicting *Cholera Morbus* commenced its ravages at Newcastle, and by preventing the opening of the theatre at the appointed time, not only destroyed all his hopes there, but (from his notice to quit) drove him from the Norwich circuit. Thus circumstanced, Mr. Dyer, at the suggestion of several friends, is induced to offer an Evening's entertainment to the ladies and gentlemen of Nottingham and the vicinity, and he most respectfully solicits their patronage, and assures them, their support will confer a great obligation, and ever be remembered with more than gratitude.

On MONDAY EVENING, Feb. 20, 1832,

The Evening's Entertainments will commence with an incidental RECITATION by Mr. DYER (as spoken by the celebrated Mrs. SIDDONS), in which he will give his

FIVE REASONS

For appealing to the liberality of his Friends and the Public.

" Reason the *first*, stand forth—(*enter the eldest son*)—a goodly boy
 The father's pride, a mother's anxious joy;
 Come in my *second reason*—(*enter the eldest girl*)—do I hear
 The enlivening plaudit, and benignant cheer?
 Enter a *third*—(*enter second son*)—more tender still in years,
 And now my *fourth*—(*enter second girl*)—not least in love appears;
 A *fifth* I can produce—but spare its age—
 A short month's *Actor* on this "wide world's stage."
 Oh! let her rest in *all* an infant's charms,
 Where she lies *pillowed* in her mother's arms!"

These are *the reasons*, these the motives keen,
 That urge *my* efforts in the toilsome scene,
 And if *I know* our frame, they stand confess'd
 In every mother's—every father's breast."

After which, a *Dramatic Entertainment* (in two parts), called
 SCENES OF THE PASSIONS,

Selected to display the varied Passions of *Jealousy*, *Parental Love*,
Courage, *Revenge*, *Conjugal Authority*, *Madness*, and an *Actor's Life*;
 and in which the several characters will be arrayed in the correct Costume,
 appropriate to the Scenes.—In the course of the Entertainment,
 Mrs. DYER will sing many favourite and popular Songs, accompanying
 herself on the *PIANO-FORTE*.

The Scenes selected are from the admired Comedy of
THE WONDER ! A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET.

Don Felix..Mr. DYER.—Donna Violante..Mrs. DYER.

THE CELEBRATED PLAY OF

VIRGINIUS, THE ROMAN FATHER.

Virginius, MR. DYER.—Virginia, Mrs. DYER.

SONG, "The Banners of Blue," by Mrs. DYER.

SHAKSPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAY OF

HENRY THE FOURTH.

Hotspur....MR. DYER.—Lady Percy....Mrs. DYER.

MATURIN'S CELEBRATED TRAGEDY OF

BERTRAM, OR THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND.

Bertram..MR. DYER.—Imogene..Mrs. DYER.

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 And now my *fourth*—(*enter second girl*)—not least in love appears ;
 A *fifth* I can produce—but spare its age—
 A short month's Actor on this “ wide world's stage.”
 Oh ! let her rest in all an infant's charms,
 Where she lies pillow'd in her mother's arms !

These are *the reasons*, these the motives keen,
 That urge my efforts in the toilsome scene,
 And if I know our frame, they stand confess'd
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BERTRAM, OR THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND.

Bertram..Mr. DYER.—Imogene..Mrs. DYER.

SONG, "The Plain Gold Ring," by Mrs. DYER.

THE FASHIONABLE COMEDY OF THE
HONEY MOON.

Duke Aranza, Mr. DYER.—Lopez, Master DYER (his first appearance.)
Juliana, Mrs. DYER.

Pleyel's celebrated Concertante, by Mrs. Dyer.

THE DOMESTIC DRAMA OF

THE MANIAC, OR THE HEART OF A FATHER.

Fitzarden....Mr. DYER.—Agnes....Mrs. DYER.

AND THE LAUGHABLE SKETCH OF

SYLVESTER DAGGERWOOD, THE STROLLING ACTOR.

Sylvester Daggerwood, Mr. DYER.—Authoress, Mrs. DYER.

PART II.

AN EXTRAVAGANZA, CALLED

MY WIFE ! MY WIFE !

Bridget (a Country Gawky).....	Mrs. DYER !
Flourish (a First Rate London Actress).....	Mrs. DYER !!
Goody Stubbins (a deaf old Amorous Lady of Eighty).....	Mrs. DYER !!!
Wilhelmina (a Broom Girl).....	Mrs. DYER !!!!

The Manager.....	Mr. DYER !
Broom Girl.....	Mr. DYER !!

In which latter character he will sing (with Mrs. DYER)

THE LAUGHABLE DUET OF "BUY A BROOM."

AFTER WHICH MR. DYER WILL RECITE

DRYDEN'S ODE ON ALEXANDER'S FEAST,

Attired in splendid Grecian Costume, with full Orchestral accompaniments
arranged for him by an eminent composer.

The whole to conclude with a Petite Comedy, translated from the French
of Diculafoy, called

DOUBT AND CONVICTION, OR PERSONATION.

Lord Henry and Laroche,	Mr. DYER.	Lady Julia and Priscilla,	Mrs. DYER.
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In which character she will sing

"LOVE WAS ONCE A LITTLE BOY."

Possibly my book may fall into the hands of some unfortunate, whose fate like mine may force him to peregrinate ; and as to such, a scheme of my entertainment may be useful, the indulgent reader will accept my motive as an excuse for its appearance here in the curtailed and amended form in which we played it last.

THE ACTOR'S FIVE REASONS.

When at the splendid ball, or festive treat,
The wealthy host invites his friends to meet,
No need has he to fear their hesitation,
Nor offer reasons for his invitation ;
The joys, the splendour of the expected fête
Superfluous render every artful bait.
We come, we come, cries each delighted elf,
The host may keep his reasons to himself ;
But ah ! with me, who boast no fête, no ball,
No splendid mansion, no illumined hall,
How different is the case with me to night,
Who my kind friends with promises invite
To give them reasons five, why thus I dare
Invite their presence at my humble fare.

Reason the FIRST, stand forth—(*enter the eldest son*)—
a goodly boy,
The father's pride, a mother's anxious joy ;
Come in my SECOND REASON—(*enter the eldest girl*)—
do I hear
The enlivening plaudit, and benignant cheer ?
Enter a THIRD—(*enter a second son*)—more tender still
in years ;
And now my FOURTH—(*enter a second girl*)—not least in
love appears ;
A FIFTH I can produce—but spare its age—
A short month's actor on this “wide world's stage ;”
Oh ! let her rest in all an infant's charms,
Where she lies pillow'd in her mother's arms !

These are THE REASONS,—these the motives keen,
That urge my efforts in the toilsome scene,
And if I know our fraine, they stand confess'd
In every mother's—every father's breast.

SCENES OF THE PASSIONS.

PART I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment,—Table with Books on it,—Two Chairs.*

Enter a LADY.

Lady. This anxiety is insupportable.—'Tis past the usual hour of my husband's return. Suffering severely as he does from disappointment, I fear the effect on his proudly sensitive spirit. Foiled in his expectations he is now arranging an entertainment, from which he anticipates the most favourable results, but for my own part I doubt.

GENTLEMAN—(without.)

“ Why let the stricken deer go weep, the hart ungalled play,
For some must watch, while some must sleep—thus runs the
world away.”

Enter.

My dear I have such news for you.

Lady. What! a London engagement?

Gent. Oh no! I would not accept that now, were it to offer. I have a scheme that will make our fortune.

Lady. “ The grapes are sour,” but what is your scheme.

Gent. You know I have a little talent.

Lady. Oh yes! I know you have a *little* talent.

Gent. Come, come, don't be too severe. It is little enough I grant, but was it less the cause in which I employ would ennable it, for nothing can be nobler than a father exerting every honest effort for the support of his children, and the dear mother of his babes.

Lady. Forgive me! but your scheme—

Gent. I purpose arranging an entertainment, to be called “ Scenes of the Passions,” in which we must depict the “ living manners as they rise.”

Lady. We! really I shall play but badly.

Gent. Nay do not doubt—do your best, and as the woman says in the play, “ may heaven prosper all your good intents.”

Lady. But I have no taste for the higher walks of the drama, and disapprobation—

SONG.—“ *Tell me have you seen a Toy.* ”

Enter GENTLEMAN as FELIX.

My Felix, my everlasting love ! (Runs into his arms.)

FEL. My life ! my soul ! Violante !

VIO. What hazards dost thou run for me ? Oh, how shall I requite thee ?

FEL. If, during this tedious, painful exile, thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

VIO. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself ? No, if the god of love were lost to all the rest of humankind, thy image would secure him in my breast ; I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

FEL. My heart’s the proper sphere where love resides ; could he quit that, he would be no where found ; and, yet Violante, I’m in doubt.

VIO. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix ?

FEL. True love has many fears, and fears as many eyes as fame ; yet sure I think they see no fault in thee.

(Colonel Briton taps at the window.)

What’s that ? (Taps again.)

VIO. What ? I hear nothing. (Again.)

FEL. Ha ! What means this signal at your window ?

VIO. Somewhat, perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it ; it can be nothing else.

COL. B. (Within.) Hist, Hist ! Donna Violante ! Donna Violante !

FEL. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam ? Death, I’ll know the bottom of this immediately. (Offers to go.)

VIO. Nay, nay, nay, you must not leave me.

(Runs and catches hold of him.)

FEL. Oh ! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam. It is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go ; my presence is but a restraint upon you. (Struggles to get from her.)

(The Colonel taps louder.)

FEL. Hark, he grows impatient at your delay. Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you ? Pray let me go, madam. Consider, the gentleman wants you at the window. Confusion ! (Struggles.)

COR. B. I have done—only this : Be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping. (*Exit from the window.*)

FEL. Pray observe the gentleman's request, madam.

(*Walks from her.*)

VIO. I am all confusion.

FEL. You are all truth, all love, all faith ; oh, thou all woman ! How have I been deceived. 'Sdeath, could you not have imposed upon me for this one night ? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on. Oh, thou—

VIO. Can I bear this from you ? (*Weeps.*)

FEL. (*Repeats.*) "When I left this house to-night." To-night, the devil ! returned so soon !

VIO. Oh, Isabella ! what hast thou involved me in ? (*Aside.*)

FEL. (*Repeats.*) "This house contains my soul." Oh, sweet soul !

VIO. Yet I resolve to keep the secret. (*Aside.*)

FEL. (*Repeats.*) "Be careful of my life, for 'tis in your keeping." Damnation !—How ugly she appears ! (*Looks at her.*)

VIO. Do not look so sternly on me, but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you, nor am I false.

FEL. Not false, not injured me ? Oh, Violante, lost and abandoned to thy vice ! Not false ! Oh, monstrous !

VIO. Indeed, I am not. There is a cause which I must not reveal. Oh, think how far honour can oblige your sex ; then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

FEL. Honour ! What hast thou to do with honour, thou, that canst admit plurality of lovers ? A secret ! ha, ha, ha ! his affairs are wondrous safe, who trusts his secrets to a woman's keeping ; but you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam, for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same.

VIO. My love !

FEL. My torment ! my absence is necessary, I'll oblige you. (*Going, Violante takes hold of him.*)

VIO. Oh, let me undeceive you first.

FEL. Impossible.

VIO. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

FEL. Durst ! ha, ha, ha ! durst, quotha ?

VIO. But another time I'll tell thee all.

FEL. Nay, now or never.

VIO. Now it cannot be.

FEL. Then it shall never be. Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell. *[Breaks from her and exit.]*

VIO. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet not even this shall draw the secret from me.

*That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;
And trust to love, my love to reconcile.*

Re-enter FELIX, in a surly humour.

Felix, what brings you back so soon?

FEL. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak: Oh! I shall burst! *(Aside. Throws himself into a chair.)*

VIO. Bless me! are you not well, my Felix?

FEL. Yes—no—I don't know what I am.

VIO. Hey-day! What's the matter now? Another jealous whim?

FEL. With what an air she carries it! I sweat at her impudence. *(Aside.)*

VIO. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them.

(Here he affects to be careless of her.)

FEL. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean; I disturb you, no doubt; but were I in a better humour, I should not incommod you less; I am but too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

VIO. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome: but when you reserve me for your ill-nature, I waive your merit, and consider what's due to myself. And I must be so free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of your's will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principle of love.

FEL. *(Rises.)* And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break, as your vanity would tempt you to believe. I cannot brook the provocation you give.

VIO. This is not to be borne. Insolent ! You abandon ! You ! whom I have so often forbade ever to see me more ! Have you not fallen at my feet ? Implored my favour and forgiveness ? Did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart ? Ungrateful man ! if my chains are so easily broken, as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living, you did not break them long ago ; and I must think him capable of brooking anything, on whom such usage could make no impression.

FEL. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power ; you would be less imperious, had my inclination been less forward to oblige you. You have, indeed, forbade me your sight, but your vanity, even then, assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed that vanity. Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired the greatest glory in conquering me. And the brightest passage of your life is, wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank. (*Walks about in a great passion.*)

VIO. Matchless arrogance ! True, Sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving ; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose. As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you ; there are men, above your boasted rank, who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

FEL. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

VIO. And what you call the brightest passage of my life, is not the least glorious part of your's.

FEL. Ha, ha ! don't put yourself in a passion, madam, for I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble. You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, without the least regard to me ; for when I quit your chamber, the world sha'n't bring me back.

VIO. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave. But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, I can't guess.

FEL. No, no, no ; not you. You were not upon the Terriero de Passa, at four this morning ?

VIO. No, I was not ; but if I were, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

FEL. Oh, doubtless, madam ! and you might meet Colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to

your house ; and, upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town ; nay if they ballad you, and cry you about at a halfpenny a-piece—they may, without my leave.

VIO. Audacious ! Don't provoke me, don't ; my reputation is not to be sported with (*going up to him*) at this rate. No, sir, it is not. (*Bursts into tears*). Inhuman Felix ? Oh, Isabella ! what a train of ills thou hast brought on me ! (*Aside*.)

FEL. Ha ! I cannot bear to see her weep. A woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. (*Aside*.) Oh, Violante !—'Sdeath ! What a dog am I ! Now have I no power to stir.—Dost thou not know such a person as Colonel Briton ? Pr'ythee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning, upon the Terriero de Passa ?

VIO. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate ! But I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of, much less to act. By heaven I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

FEL. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante ?

VIO. Yes ; but he mistook me for another, or he was drunk, I know not which.

FEL. And do you not know this Scotch colonel ?

VIO. Pray ask me no more questions ; this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you ; therefore, pray leave me.

FEL. Didst thou ever love me, Violante ?

VIO. I'll answer nothing. You were in haste to be gone just now ; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir.

(*She sits down, and turns aside*.)

FEL. I shall not long interrupt your contemplation. Stubborn to the last. (*Aside*.)

VIO. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done ? (*Aside*.)

FEL. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her ; for something whispers to my soul she is not guilty. (*Aside. He pauses ; then pulls a chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her*.) Give me your hand at parting, however,

Anticipation of my wish. I think
Icilius loves my daughter—nay, I know it;
And such a man I'd challenge for her husband;—
And only waited, till her forward spring,
Put on, a little more, the genial likeness
Of colouring into summer, ere I sought
To nurse a flower, which, blossoming too early,
Too early often dies.
I'll ascertain it shortly—soft, she comes.

Enter LADY.

VIRGINIA. Well, father, what's your will?

VIR. I wish'd to see you,
To ask you of your tasks—how they go on—
And what your masters say of you—what last
You did. I hope you never play
The truant?

VIRGINIA. The truant! No, indeed, Virginius.

VIR. I am sure you do not—kiss me!

VIRGINIA. O! my father,
I am so happy, when you're kind to me!

VIR. You are so happy when I'm kind to you!
Am I not always kind? I never spoke
An angry word to you in all my life,
Virginia! You are happy when I'm kind!
That's strange; and makes me think you have some reason
To fear I may be otherwise than kind—
Is't so, my girl?

VIRGINIA. Indeed I did not know
What I was saying to you?

VIR. Why, that's worse
And worse! What! when you said your father's kindness
Made you so happy, am I to believe
You were not thinking of him?

VIRGINIA. I————— [Greatly confused.]

VIR. Go, fetch me
The latest task you did. [Exit LADY.]

It is enough.
Her artless speech, like crystal, shows the thing
'Twould hide, but only covers. 'Tis enough!
She loves, and fears her father may condemn.

Here, sir.

VIR. What's this ?

VIRGINIA. 'Tis Homer's history
Of great Achilles parting from Briseis.

VIR. You have done it well. The colouring is good.
The figure's well design'd. 'Tis very well !—
Whose face is this you've given to Achilles ?

VIRGINIA. Whose face ?

VIR. I've seen this face ! Tut ! Tut ! I know it
As well as I do my own, yet can't bethink me
Whose face it is !

VIRGINIA. You mean Achilles' face ?

VIR. Did I not say so ? 'Tis the very face
Of—No ! No ! Not of him. There's too much youth
And comeliness ; and too much fire, to suit
The face of Siccius Dentatus.

VIRGINIA. O !
You surely never took it for his face !

VIR. Why, no ; for now I look again, I'd swear
You lost the copy ere you drew the head,
And, to requite Achilles for the want
Of his own face, contriv'd to borrow one
From Lucius Icilius.

VIRGINIA. Virginius !

VIR. Well ?

VIRGINIA. Virginius !

VIR. How the child
Reiterates my name.

VIRGINIA. There's not a hope
I have, but is the client of Icilius.

VIR. Well, well !
We'll have the revel yet ! the board shall smoke !
The cup shall sparkle, and the jest shall soar
And mock us from the roof ! Will that content you ?
Not till the war be done tho'—Yet, ere then,
Some tongue, that now needs only wag, to make
The table ring, may have a tale to tell
So petrifying, that it cannot utter it !

Farewell, Virginia :

Thy future husband for a time must be
Bellona's. To thy tasks again, my child ;
Be thou the bride of study for a time.
Farewell !

VIRGINIA. My father !

Vir. May the gods protect thee.

VIRGINIA. My father !

Vir. Does the blood forsake thy cheek ?

Come to my arms once more ! Remember, girl,
The first and foremost debt a Roman owes,
Is to his country ; and it must be paid,
If need be, with his life. Now, once for all, farewell.
The foe ! the foe ! Does he not tread on Roman ground ?
Charge on him ! drive him back ! or die ! [*Exit Virginius.*]

Lady. Well, our Roman is as good as the Spaniard, and with two such actors for the leading tragedy and comedy, I wonder my lord and master can hesitate on an amateur play. I shall now require the assistance of my eldest boy, whom I have instructed before in Lopez—for my next scene is with the Duke Aranza, in which he throws “off the habit of the Duke”—and tames the haughty spirit of Juliana. It is not wealth that gives happiness to the wedded pair, but love, true love.

SONG.—“ *Plain Gold Ring.* ”—(Exit.)

Enter GENTLEMAN as ARANZA with LADY.

DUKE. (Brings a chair forward, and sits down.) You are welcome home.

JULIANA. Home ! You are merry ; this retired spot
Would be a palace for an owl !

DUKE. 'Tis ours—

JUL. Ay, for the time we stay in it.

DUKE. By Heaven,
This is the noble mansion that I spoke of !

JUL. This !—You are not in earnest, though you bear it
With such a sober brow.—Come, come, you jest.

DUKE. Indeed I jest not ; were it ours in jest,
We should have none, wife.

JUL. Are you serious, sir ?

DUKE. I swear, as I'm your husband, and no duke.

JUL. No duke ?

DUKE. But of my own creation, lady.

JUL. Am I betray'd—Nay, do not play the fool !
It is too keen a joke.

DUKE. You'll find it true.

JUL. You are no duke, then ?

DUKE. None.

JUL. Have I been cozen'd ?
And have you no estate, sir ?
No palaces, nor houses ?

[*Aside.*]

DUKE. None but this :—
A small snug dwelling, and in good repair.

JUL. Nor money, nor effects ?

DUKE. None that I know of.

JUL. And the attendants who have waited on us—

DUKE. They were my friends ; who, having done my business,
Are gone about their own.

JUL. Why, then, 'tis clear.—
That I was ever born !—What are you, sir ?

[*Aside.*]

DUKE. (*Rises.*) I am an honest man—that may content you !
Young, nor ill-favour'd—Should not that content you ?
I am your husband, and that must content you.

JUL. I will go home !

[*Going.*]

DUKE. You are at home, already.

[*Staying her.*]

JUL. I'll not endure it !—But remember this—
Duke, or no duke, I'll be a duchess, sir !

DUKE. A duchess ! You shall be a queen,—to all
Who, by the courtesy, will call you so.

JUL. And I will have attendance !

DUKE. So you shall,
When you have learnt to wait upon yourself.

JUL. To wait upon myself ! Must I bear this ?
I could tear out my eyes, that bade you woo me,
And bite my tongue in two, for saying yes !

DUKE. And if you should, 'twould grow again.—
I think, to be an honest yeoman's wife

(For such, my would-be duchess, you will find me,) .
You were cut out by nature.

JUL. You will find then,
That education, sir, has spoilt me for it.—
Why ! do you think I'll work ?

DUKE. I think 'twill happen, wife.

JUL. What ! Rub and scrub
Your noble palace clean ?

DUKE. Those taper fingers
Will do it daintily.

JUL. And dress your victuals
(If there be any) ?—Oh ! I could go mad !

DUKE. And mend my hose, and darn my nightcaps neatly ;
Wait, like an echo, till you're spoken to—

JUL. Or like a clock, talk only once an hour ?

DUKE. Or like a dial ; for that quietly
Performs its work, and never speaks at all.

JUL. To feed your poultry and your hogs !—Oh, monstrous !
And when I stir abroad, on great occasions,
Carry a squeaking tithe pig to the vicar ;
Or jolt with higgler's wives the market trot,
To sell your eggs and butter !

DUKE. Excellent !
How well you sum the duties of a wife !
Why what a blessing I shall have in you !

JUL. A blessing !

DUKE. When they talk of you and me,
Darby and Joan shall be no more remember'd ;—
We shall be happy !

JUL. Shall we ?

DUKE. Wondrous happy !
Oh, you will make an admirable wife !

JUL. I'll make a devil.

DUKE. What ?

JUL. A very devil.

DUKE. Oh, no ! We'll have no devils.

JUL. I'll not bear it !
I'll to my father's !—

'Tis a conversion too miraculous ;
Her cold disdain yields with too free a spirit ;
Like ice, which, melted by unnatural heat—
Not by the gradual and kindly thaw
Of the resolving elements—give it air,
Will straight congeal again.—She comes—I'll try her.

Enter JULIANA, in a Peasant's Dress, through Door in F

Why, what's the matter now ?

JUL. That foolish letter !

DUKE. What ! You repent of having written it ?

JUL. I do, indeed. I could cut off my fingers
For being partners in the act.

DUKE. No matter ;
You may indite one in a milder spirit,
That shall pluck out its sting.

JUL. I can—

DUKE. You must.

JUL. I can.

DUKE. You shall.

JUL. I will, if 'tis your pleasure.

DUKE. Well replied !
I now see plainly you have found your wits,
And are a sober, metamorphosed woman.

JUL. I am, indeed.

DUKE. I know it ; I can read you.
There is a true contrition in your looks :—
Yours is no penitence in masquerade—
You are not playing on me ?

JUL. Playing, sir.

DUKE. You have found out the vanity of those things
For which you lately sigh'd so deep ?

JUL. I have, sir.

DUKE. A dukedom !—Pshaw !—It is an idle thing.

JUL. I have begun to think so.

DUKE. That's a lie !
Is not this tranquil and retired spot
More rich in real pleasures, than a palace ?

JUL. I like it infinitely.

DUKE. That's another !
The mansion's small, 'tis true, but very snug.

JUL. Exceeding snug !

DUKE. The furniture not splendid,
But then all useful.

JUL. All exceeding useful.

There's not a piecee on't but serves twenty purposes.

DUKE. And, though we're seldom plagued by visitors,
We have the best of company—ourselves.
Nor, whilst our limbs are full of active youth,
Need we loll in a carriage, to provoke
A lazy circulation of the blood, [Takes her arm, and walks
When walking is a nobler exercise.

JUL. More wholesome, too.

DUKE. And far less dangerous.

JUL. That's certain !

DUKE. Then for servants, all agree,
They are the greatest plagues on earth.

JUL. No doubt on't !

DUKE. Who, then, that has a taste for happiness,
Would live in a large mansion, only fit
To be an habitation for the winds ;
Keep gilded ornaments for dust and spiders ;
See every body, care for nobody ;
When they could live as we do ?

JUL. Who, indeed ?

DUKE. Here we want nothing.

JUL. Nothing !—Yes, one thing.

DUKE. Indeed ! What's that ?

JUL. You will be angry !

DUKE. Nay—

Not if it be a reasonable thing.

JUL. What wants the bird, who, from his wavy prison,
Sings to the passing travellers of air
A wistful note—that she were with them, sir !

DUKE. Umph ! What, your liberty ? I see it now. [Ass

JUL. 'Twere a pity in such a paradise
I should be caged !

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Sings to the passing travellers of air
A wistful note—that she were with them, sir ?

DUKE. Umph ! What, your liberty ? I see it now. [*Aside.*]

JUL. 'Twere a pity in such a paradise
I should be caged !

DUKE. Why, whither would you, wife?

JUL. Only to taste the freshness of the air,
That breathes a wholesome spirit from without ;
And weave a chaplet for you, of those flowers
That throw their perfume through my window-bar,
And then I will return, sir.

DUKE. You are free :—
But use your freedom wisely.

JUL. Doubt me not, sir !
I'll use it quickly too.

DUKE. But I do doubt you.
There is a lurking devil in her eye,
That plays at boopeep there, in spite of her.
Her anger is but smother'd, not burnt out :—
And ready, give it vent, to blaze again.
You have your liberty—
But I shall watch you closely, lady,
And see that you abuse it not.

1. *Take, a*

Re-enter the Duke, bringing in JULIANA.

DUKE. Nay, no resistance I—For a month, at least,
I am your husband.

JUL. True!—And what's a husband?

DUKE. Why, as some wives would metamorphose him
A very miserable ass, indeed!

JUL. True, there are many such.

DUKE. And there are men,
Whom not a swelling lip, or wrinkled brow,
Or the loud rattle of a woman's tongue
Or, what's more hard to parry, the warm close
Of lips, that from the inmost heart of man
Plucks out his stern resolves—can move one jot
From the determined purpose of his soul,
Or stir an inch from his prerogative.—
Ere it be long, you'll dream of such a man.

JUL. Where, waking, shall I see him?

DUKE. Look on me?
Come, to your chamber!

JUL. I won't be confined.

DUKE. Won't!—Say you so?

JUL. Well, then, I do request
You won't confine me.

DUKE. You'll leave me?

JUL. No, indeed!

As there is truth in language, on my soul
I will not leave you.

DUKE. You've deceived me once—

JUL. And, therefore, do not merit to be trusted.
I do confess it:—but, by all that's sacred,
Give me my liberty, and I will be
A patient, drudging, most obedient wife!

DUKE. Yes; but a grumbling one?

JUL. No; on my honour,
I will do all you ask, ere you have said it.

DUKE. And with no secret murmur of your spirit

JUL. With none, believe me!

DUKE. Have a care!

For if I catch you on the wing again,
I'll clip you closer than a garden hawk,
And put you in a cage, where day-light comes not;
Where you may fret your pride against the bars,
Until your heart break.

See who's at the door!—

[Knocking at the Door.]

[She goes and opens it.]

Enter LOPEZ.

My neighbour Lopez!—Welcome sir; my wife—

A chair! (To Juliana.)—(She brings a chair to Lopez, and throws it down.) Your pardon—you'll excuse her, sir—
A little awkward, but exceeding willing.

One for your husband!—(She brings another chair, and is going to throw it down as before; but the Duke looking stedfastly at her, she desists, and places it gently by him.)—
Pray be seated, neighbour!

Now, you may serve yourself.

JUL. I thank you, sir,

DUKE. I'd rather you should sit.

JUL. If you will have it so—'Would I were dead !

[*Aside.*—*She brings a Chair, and sits down.*

DUKE. Though now I think again, 'tis fit you stand,
That you may be more free to serve our guest.

JUL. Even as you command.

[*Rises.*

DUKE. You will eat something ?

[*To Lopez.*

LOPEZ. Not a morsel, thank ye.

DUKE. Then, you will drink ?—A glass of wine, at least ?

LOPEZ. Well, I am warm with walking, and care not if I do
taste your liquor.

DUKE. You have some wine, wife ?

JUL. I must e'en submit !

[*Exit.*

DUKE. This visit, sir, is kind and neighbourly.

LOPEZ. I came to ask a favour of you. We have to-day a
sort of merry-making on the green hard by—'twere too much to
call it a dance—and as you are a stranger here—

DUKE. Your patience for a moment.

Re-enter JULIANA with a Horn of Liquor.

DUKE. (*Taking it.*) What have we here ?

JUL. 'Tis wine—you call'd for wine !

DUKE. And did I bid you bring it in a nut-shell ?

LOPEZ. Nay, there is plenty !

DUKE. I can't suffer it.

You must excuse me. (*To Lopez.*) When friends drink with us,
'Tis usual, love, to bring it in a jug,
Or else they may suspect we grudge our liquor.
You understand !—A jug !

JUL. I shall remember.

[*Exit.*

LOPEZ. I am ashamed to give so much trouble.

DUKE. No trouble ; she must learn her duty, sir ;
I'm only sorry you should be kept waiting.
But you were speaking—

LOPEZ. As I was saying, it being the conclusion of our vintage,
we have assembled the lads and lasses of the village—

Re-enter JULIANA.

DUKE. Now we shall do !
Why, what the devil's this ?

JUL. Wine, sir.

DUKE. This wine ? 'Tis foul as ditch-water !
Did you shake the cask ?

JUL. What shall I say ? (*Aside.*) Yes, sir.

DUKE. You did !

JUL. I did.

DUKE. I thought so !
Why, do you think, my love, that wine is physic,
That must be shook before 'tis swallow'd ?—
Come, try again !

JUL. I'll go no more ! [*Puts down the wine on the ground.*

DUKE. You won't ?

JUL. I won't.

DUKE. You won't ? [*Showing the Key.*
You had forgot yourself, my love.

JUL. Well, I'll obey ! [*Takes up the wine, and exit.*

DUKE. Was ever man so plagued !
You have a wife, no doubt, of more experience,
Who would not by her awkwardness disgrace
Herself or husband thus ? This 'tis to marry
An inexperienced girl !
I'm ashamed to try your patience, sir ;
But women, like watches, must be set
With care, to make them go well.

Enter JULIANA.

Ay, this looks well ! [*Pouring it out.*

JUL. The heavens be praised !

DUKE. Come, sir, your judgment ?

LOPEZ. 'Tis excellent !—But, as I was saying, to-day we have
some country pastimes on the green.—Will it please you both to
join our simple recreations ?

DUKE. We will attend you. Come, renew your draught, sir !

LOPEZ. We shall expect you presently ; till then, good-even, sir.

DUKE. I'd rather you should sit.

JUL. If you will have it so—'Would I were dead !

[*Aside.—She brings a Chair, and sits down.*

DUKE. Though now I think again, 'tis fit you stand,
That you may be more free to serve our guest.

JUL. Even as you command.

[*Rises.*

DUKE. You will eat something ?

[*To Lopez.*

LOPEZ. Not a morsel, thank ye.

DUKE. Then, you will drink ?—A glass of wine, at least ?

LOPEZ. Well, I am warm with walking, and care not if I do
taste your liquor.

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sort of merry-making on the green hard by—'twere too much to
call it a dance—and as you are a stranger here—

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'Tis usual, love, to bring it in a jug,
Or else they may suspect we grudge our liquor.
You understand !—A jug !

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[*Exit.*

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I'm only sorry you should be kept waiting.
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Why, do you think, my love, that wine is physic,
That must be shook before 'tis swallow'd ?—
Come, try again !

JUL. I'll go no more ! [*Puts down the wine on the ground.*

DUKE. You won't ?

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DUKE. You won't ? [*Showing the Key.*
You had forgot yourself, my love.

JUL. Well, I'll obey ! [*Takes up the wine, and exit.*

DUKE. Was ever man so plagued !
You have a wife, no doubt, of more experience,
Who would not by her awkwardness disgrace
Herself or husband thus ? This 'tis to marry
An inexperienced girl !
I'm ashamed to try your patience, sir ;
But women, like watches, must be set
With care, to make them go well.

Enter JULIANA.

Ay, this looks well !

[*Pouring it out.*

JUL. The heavens be praised !

DUKE. Come, sir, your judgment ?

LOPEZ. 'Tis excellent !—But, as I was saying, to-day we have
some country pastimes on the green.—Will it please you both to
join our simple recreations ?

DUKE. We will attend you. Come, renew your draught, sir !

LOPEZ. We shall expect you presently ; till then, good-even, sir.

DUKE. Good-even, neighbour. (*Exit Louise*:) Go and you ready.

JUL. I take no pleasure in these rural sports.

DUKE. Then you shall go to please your husband. Hold I'll have no glittering gewgaws stuck about you, To stretch the gaping eyes of idiot wonder, And make men stare upon a piece of earth As on the star-wrought firmament—no feathers To wave as streamers to your vanity— Nor cumbrous silk, that with its rustling sound Makes proud the flesh that bears it. She's adorn'd Amply, that in her husband's eye looks lovely The truest mirror that an honest wife Can see her beauty in!

JUL. I shall observe, sir.

DUKE. I should like well to see you in the dress I last presented you.

JUL. The blue one, sir?—

DUKE. No, love, the white.—Thus modestly attu'd, An half-blown rose stuck in thy braided hair, With no more diamonds than those eyes are made of, No deeper rubies than compose thy lips, Nor pearls more precious than inhabit them; With the pure red and white, which that same hand Which blends the rainbow mingles in thy cheeks; This well-proportion'd form, (think not I flatter) In graceful motion to harmonious sounds, And thy free tresses dancing in the wind;— Thou'l fix as much observance, as chaste dams' Can meet, without a blush. [*Exit Juliana*, *done in*] I'll trust her with these bumpkins. There no coxcomb Shall buz his fulsome praises in her ear, And swear she has in all things, save myself, A most especial taste. No meddling gossip (Who, having claw'd or cuddled into bondage The thing misnamed a husband, privately Instructs less daring spirits to revolt) Shall, from the fund of her experience, teach her When lordly man can best be made a fool of. Ye that would have obedient wives, beware Of meddling woman's kind officious care. [*Enter*]

Lady. (Enters.) This gentleman is, if possible, a better actor than the Felix ; yet, I think, (I may be partial,) yet, I think my boy is quite as clever as the Aranza. I see the revengeful Bertram is my hero now, in his first scene with Imogine, when he discovers she is the wife of Aldobrand, his rival and his foe.

SONG.—“ *Rise gentle Moon.*”

Enter GENTLEMAN as BERTRAM.

Bertram enters slowly from the end of the stage ; his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the earth, she does not know him.

IMOGENE. A form like that hath broken on my dreams
So darkly wild, so proudly stern,
Doth it rise on me waking ? [*Bertram comes to the end of the stage, and stands without looking at her.*]
Stranger, I sent for thee, for that I deemed
Some wound was thine, that yon free band might chafe,—
Perchance thy worldly wealth sunk with yon wreck—
Such wound my gold can heal—the castle’s almoner—

BER. The wealth of worlds were heaped on me in vain.

IMO. Oh then I read thy loss—Thy heart is sunk
In the dark waters pitiless ; some dear friend,
Or brother, loved as thine own soul, lies there—
Gold I can give, but can no comfort give
For I am comfortless.

BER. (Striking his heart.)
No dews give freshness to this blasted soil.—

IMO. Strange is thy form, but more thy words are strange—
Fearful it seems to hold this parley with thee.
Tell me thy race and country—

BER. What avails it ?
The wretched have no country : that dear name
Comprises home, kind kindred, fostering friends,
Protecting laws, all that binds man to man—
But none of these are mine ;—I have no country—
And for my race, the last dread trump shall wake
The sheeted relics of mine ancestry,
Ere trump of herald to the armed lists
In the bright blazon of their stainless coat,
Calls their lost child again.—

IMO. I shake to hear him—
There is an awful thrilling in his voice,—

The soul of other days comes rushing in them.—
If nor my bounty nor my tears can aid thee,
Stranger, farewell ; and 'mid thy misery
Pray, when thou tell'st thy beads, for one more wretched.

BER. Stay, gentle lady, I would somewhat with thee.

Imogene retreats terrified.

(*Detaining her*)—Thou shalt not go—

IMO. Shall not!—Who art thou? speak—

BER. And must I speak?—

There was a voice which all the world, but thee
Might have forgot, and been forgiven,—

IMO. My senses blaze—between the dead and living
I stand in fear—oh God!—It cannot be—
Those thick black locks—those wild and sunburnt features
He looked not thus—but then that voice—
It cannot be—for he would know my name.

BER. Imogene—[*She has tottered towards him during the last speech, and when he utters her name, shrieks and falls into his arms.*]

BER. Imogene—yes,
Thus pale, cold, dying, thus thou art most fit
To be enfolded to this desolate heart—
A blighted lily on its icy bed—
Nay, look not up, 'tis thus I would behold thee.
That pale cheek looks like truth—I'll gaze no more—
That fair, that pale, dear cheek, these helpless arms,
If I look longer they will make me human.

IMO. (*starting from him.*)
Fly, fly, the vassals of thine enemy wait
To do thee dead.

BER. Then let them wield the thunder,
Fell is their dint, who're mailed in despair.
Let mortal might sever the grasp of Bertram.

IMO. Release me—I must break from him—he knows not—
Oh God!

BER. Imogene—madness seizes me—
Why do I find thee in mine enemy's walls?
What dost thou do in halls of Aldobrand?
Infernal light doth shoot athwart my mind—
Swear thou art a dependent on his bounty,
That chance, or force, or sorcery, brought thee thither.

Thou canst not be—my throat is swoln with agony—
Hell hath no plague—Oh no, thou couldst not do it.

IMO. (*kneeling.*) Mercy.

BER. Thou hast it not, or thou wouldest speak—
Speak, speak, (*with frantic violence.*)

IMO. I am the wife of Aldobrand,—
To save a famishing father did I wed.

BER. I will not curse *her*—but the hoarded vengeance—

IMO. Aye—curse, and consummate the horrid spell,
For broken-hearted, in despairing hour
With every omen dark and dire I wedded—
With some dark spell, not holy vow they bound me,
Full were the rites of horror and despair.
They wanted but—the seal of Bertram's curse.

BER. (*not heeding her.*)

—Talk of her farher—could a father love thee
As I have loved ?

—What was her father ? could a father's love
Compare with mine?—in want, and war, and peril,
Things that would thrill the hearer's blood to tell of,
My heart grew human when I thought of thee—
Imogene would have shuddered for my danger—
Imogene would have bound my leechless wounds—
Imogene would have sought my nameless corse,
And known it well—and she was wedded—wedded—
—Was there no name in hell's dark catalogue
To brand thee with, but mine immortal foe's ?—
And did I 'scape from war, and want, and famine
To perish by the falsehood of a woman ?

IMO. Oh spare me,—Bertram—oh preserve thyself—

BER. A despot's vengeance, a false country's curse,
The spurn of menials whom this hand had fed—
In my heart's steeled pride I shook them off,
As the bayed lion from his hurtless hide
Shakes his pursuers' darts—across their path—
One dart alone took aim, thy hand did barb it.

IMO. He did not hear my father's cry—Oh heaven—
Nor food, nor fire, nor raiment, and his child
Knelt madly to the hungry walls for succour
E'er her wrought brain could bear the horrid thought
Or wed with him—or—see thy father perish.

BER. Thou tremblest least I curse thee, tremble not—
Though thou hast made me, woman, very wretched—
Though thou hast made me—but I will not curse thee—
Hear the last prayer of Bertram's broken heart,
That heart which thou hast broken, not his foes !—
May pomp and pride shout in thine addered path
Till thou shalt feel and sicken at their hollowness—
May he thou'st wed, be kind and generous to thee
Till thy wrung heart, stabb'd by his noble fondness
Writhe in detesting consciousness of falsehood—
May thy babe's smile speak daggers to that mother
Who cannot love the father of her child,
And in the bright blaze of the festal hall,
When vassals kneel, and kindred smile around thee,
May ruined Bertram's pledge hiss in thine ear—
Joy to the proud dame of St. Aldobrand—
While his cold corse doth bleach beneath her towers.

IMO. (*Detaining him.*) Stay.

BER. No.

IMO. Thou hast a dagger.

BER. Not for woman.—

IMO. (*Flinging herself on the ground*)

It was my prayer to die in Bertram's presence,
But not by words like these—

BER. (*Turning back*)—on the cold earth !
—I do forgive thee from my inmost soul—

IMO. (*Rising*) Ha ! art thou there ?—
Come kneel with me, and witness to the vow
I offer to renounce thee, and to die—

BER. Nay, it is meet that we renounce each other—
Have we not been a miserable pair ?
Hath not our fatal passion cursed, not blessed us ?—
Had we not loved, how different were our fates ;
For thou hadst been a happy honoured dame,
And I had slept the sleep of those that dream not—
But life was dear, while Imogene did love.

IMO. Witness my vow--while I have breath to speak it—

BER. Then make it thus—why dost thou shrink from me ?
Despair hath its embrace as well as passion—
May I not hold thee in these folded arms ?
May I not clasp thee to this blasted heart ?

When the rich soil teemed with youth's generous flowers—
 I felt thee sunshine—now thy rayless light
 Falls like the cold moon on a blasted heath
 Mocking its desolation—speak thy vow—
 I will not chide thee if the words should kill me—

IMO. (*Sinking into his arms.*) I cannot utter it—

BER. Have we not loved, as none have ever loved,
 And must we part as none have ever parted ?
 I know thy lord is near; I know his towers
 Must shut thee from my sight—the curfew-hour
 Will send me on a far and fearful journey—
 Give me one hour, nor think thou givest too much,
 When grief is all the boon.—

IMO. One hour to *thee*?—I am desperate
 To say I'll meet thee, but I will, will meet thee;
 No future hour can rend my heart like this,
 Save that which breaks it.

[*Exit Imogene.*

BER. She weeps—no husband wipes her tears away—
 She weeps—no babe doth cheer the guilty mother.
 Aldobrand—No—I never will forgive thee,
 For I am sunk beneath thee.
 'Twas but e'en now, I would have knelt to him
 With the prostration of a conscious villain;
 I would have crouched beneath his spurning feet;
 I would have felt their trampling tread, and blessed it—
 For I had injured him—and mutual injury
 Had freed my withered heart—Villain—I thank thee.
 Lord Aldobrand, I brave thee in thy halls, [*Wild with passion.*
 Wrecked, famished, wrung in heart, and worn in limb—
 For bread of thine this lip hath never stained—
 I bid thee to the conflict—ay, come on—
 Coward—hast armed thy vassals?—come then all—
 Lord Aldobrand, I brave thee to the conflict.

[*Exit.*

LADY. (*Enters.*) A very impassioned actor, certainly, and he appears conversant with the business of the scene; but there are none of them equal to my husband. I am curious to learn what his entertainment will be, I trust my share in it is but small, for the only merit I can boast, is an earnest desire to please my friends. I have one scene more with the eccentric Daggerwood, and then farewell to all my greatness.

BRAVURA—“*Soldier Tired.*”

I see my Daggerwood has taken his station.

AUT. Eight, nine, ten, eleven.—Eleven o'clock? have I been waiting ever since nine, for an interview manager! Who is this asleep here, in the corner?—I is that eccentric genius, Mr. Sylvester Daggerwood, of stable company. (*Gentleman snores without.*) Dear the man snores; fatigued with his journey, I suppose *out a manuscript.*) If I could gain the ear of this man minute, I'd read him such a tragedy!

DAG. (*Dreaming.*) 'Nay, and thou'l mouth, I'll re as thee.'

AUT. Eh?—Dear me, Daggerwood's talking in acting Hamlet before twelve tallow candles in the cour

DAG. 'To be, or not to be,—'

AUT. Yes, he's at it.—Let me see—(*Turning over of her tragedy,*)—I think there's no doubt of its runni

DAG. 'That is the question.'—'Who would fard

AUT. Dear me! there is no bearing you.—His Grac nage will fill half the side boxes, and I'll warrant we' critics into the pit.

DAG. 'To groan and sweat,—
When he himself might his quietus make—'

AUT. Quietus!—I wish, with all my heart, I could m The Countess of Crambo insists on the best places fo night of performance. She'll sit in the stage box.

DAG. 'With her hey ley gaily, gambo railey.'

AUT. O, Mr. Daggerwood! There's no enduring t sir!—Do you intend to sleep any more?

Enter Gentleman as SYLVESTER DAGGERWOOD, upon one knee.—Eh?—What?—When? ‘Met heard a voice cry—sleep no more! ’

AUT. 'Faith, sir, you heard something very like it, voice was mine.'

DAG. Madam, I am your most respectful servant to Sylvester Daggerwood—whose benefit is fixed for the 6 June, by particular desire of several persons of dist (*Gives play-bill.*)—You'd make an excellent Lady Madam!

AUT. Sir?

DAG. ' Macbeth doth murder sleep ; the innocent sleep ;
 Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course ! '—
 Faith, and very often the first course, too ; when a dinner is un-
 avoidably deferred by your humble servant to command, Sylvester
 Daggerwood, whose benefit is fixed for the eleventh of June, by
 particular desire of several persons of distinction.

AUT. I am very sorry, sir, you should ever have occasion to
 postpone so pleasant a performance.

DAG. Eating, madam, is a most popular entertainment. An
 entertainment for man and horse, as I may say. But I am apt to
 appear nice—and, somehow or other, I never could manage
 to sit down to dinner in a bad company.

AUT. Has your company been bad, then, of late, sir ?

DAG. D—d bad indeed, madam—the Dunstable company—
 where I have eight shillings a week, four bits of candle, one wife,
 three shirts, and nine children.

AUT. A very numerous family.

DAG. A crowded house, to be sure, madam ; but not profit-
 able. Mrs. Daggerwood, a fine figure, but unfortunately stutters ;
 so of no use in the theatrical line. Children too young to make
 a *debut*, except my eldest, Master Apollo Daggerwood, a youth
 of only eight years old, who has twice made his appearance in
 Tom Thumb, to an overflowing and brilliant barn—house, I
 mean, with unbounded and universal applause.

AUT. Have you been long upon the stage, Mr. Daggerwood ?

DAG. Fifteen years since I first smelt the lamps, madam.—My
 father was an eminent button-maker, at Birmingham, and meant
 to marry me to Miss Molly Metre, daughter to the rich director
 of the coal-works at Wolverhampton ; but I had a soul above
 buttons, and abhorred the idea of a mercenary marriage. I panted
 for a liberal profession—so ran away from my father, and engaged
 with a travelling company of comedians. In my travels, I had
 the happiness of forming a romantic attachment with the present
 Mrs. Daggerwood, wife to Sylvester Daggerwood, your humble
 servant to command : whose benefit is fixed for the eleventh of
 June, by the particular desire of several persons of distinction.
 So you see, madam, I have a taste.

AUT. Have you ! Then sit down, and I'll read you my tragedy.
 I am determined somebody shall hear it before I go out of this
 house. (Sits down.)

DAG. A tragedy!—Madam, I'll be ready for you in a moment. Let me prepare for woe. (*Takes out a very ragged pocket handkerchief.*) ‘This handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give.’

AUT. Faith, I should think so; and to all appearance one of the Norwood party.

DAG. Now, madam, your title—and then for the *Dram. Pers.*

AUT. The title I think will strike. The fashion of plays, you know, now, is to do away old prejudices, and to rescue certain characters from the illiberal odium with which custom has marked them. Thus we have a generous Israelite, an amiable Cynic, and so on. Now, sir, I call my play—*The Humane Footpad*.

DAG. What!

AUT. There's a title for you! Isn't it happy, eh? How do you like my footpad?

DAG. Humph!—Why I think he'll strike—but then he ought to be properly executed.

AUT. Oh, sir, let me alone for that. An exception to a general rule is now the grand secret for dramatic composition. Mine is a freebooter of benevolence, and plunders with sentiment.

DAG. There may be something in that, and for my part, I was always with Shakspeare,—‘Who steals my purse, steals trash.’ I never had any weighty reasons yet for thinking otherwise. Now, madam, as we say, please to ‘leave your damnable faces and begin.’

AUT. My damnable faces!

DAG. Come—‘We'll to't like French falconers.’

AUT. (*Reading.*) Scene first—A dark wood—night.

DAG. A very awful beginning.

AUT. (*Reading.*) The moon behind a cloud.

DAG. That's new; an audience never saw a moon behind a cloud before. But it will be devilish difficult to paint.

AUT. Don't interrupt—where was I? Oh, behind a cloud.

DAG. ‘The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces—’

AUT. Hey, dear me! what are you at?

DAG. Beg pardon: but that speech never comes into my head—but it runs away with me. Proceed.

AUT. (*Reading.*) Enter—

DAG. 'The solemn temples'—

AUT. Nay then, I've done.

DAG. So have I. I'm dumb.

AUT. (*Reading.*) Enter Egbert, musing.

DAG. O. P.

AUR. Pshaw ! what does that signify ?

DAG. Not much. 'The great globe itself—'

AUT. (*Reading.*) Egbert musing. Clouded in night I come.

DAG. (*Starting up.*) 'The cloud-capt towers,
 'The gorgeous palaces,
 'The solemn temples,' &c.

AUT. (*Gets up.*) Dear me, he's mad ! A Bedlamite ! raves like Lear, and foams out a folio of Shakspeare without drawing breath. I'm almost afraid to stay in the room with him. Dear me ! nothing but disappointments—there's the manager gone out.

DAG. 'Oh, day and night, but this is wondrous strange !'

AUT. Without seeing me—who have been waiting for him these three hours !

DAG. Three hours ! Pugh ! I've slept here for five mornings, in his old arm chair.

AUT. And there he is talking to that miserable actor Mr. Dyer, and his pert little wife.—The deuce take Mr. Dyer.

DAG. And the devil take Mrs. Dyer ! what the devil have I to do with Mrs. Dyer.

AUT. Pretty treatment ! pretty treatment truly for an authoress ! to be kept here half the morning, in a manager's anti-room, shut up with a mad Dunstable actor.

DAG. Mad ! Zounds, madam ! I'd have you to know, that 'when the wind's southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw.' Tell the manager ; tell the manager—but no matter. He don't catch me here again, that's all. Madam, you know me. I shall come to the old arm-chair again to-morrow—but must go to Dunstable the day after, for a week, to finish my engagement—wish for an interview—inclination to tread the London boards, and so on. You remember my name—Mr. Sylvester Daggerwood, whose benefit is fixed for the eleventh of June, by particular desire of several persons of distinction.

AUT. I shall be sure to tell him, sir.

DAG. 'I find thee apt;
And duller would'st thou be, than the fat wcoed
That rots itself at ease on Lethe's wharf,
Would'st thou not stir in this.'
Open the street door. 'Go on! I'll follow thee.' [Excunt.]

PART II.

SCENE.—*An Apartment,—Table with Books on it,—Two Chairs.*

Enter GENTLEMAN.

Gent. Thus far success has crowned my schemes. My wife is certainly deceived, she has no idea that the Felix, Virginius, Aranza, Bertram, and Daggerwood, were individually the same. I have, then, every hope in the success of my scheme. It appears a report has gone abroad, that I am about commencing manager, and in consequence I have received this strange looking note—
(Reads note.)

“SIR,

“I hear you are a manager, if you want a girl you had better have me. I shall call soon for I deliver this myself, and am waiting at the door for an answer.

“Yours, forever affectionately,

“BETSY BLOSSOM.”

Indeed, and if Betsy Blossom be of a piece with her note, she is a rare one. *(Knock.)* Come in.

Enter LADY as BETSY BLOSSOM, dressed as a Country Gawky.

Looks at Manager for some time, as if afraid to speak

MAN. Well, child,—What do you want?

BET. He! he! he!—Want?

MAN. Do you look for me?

BET. He! he! he!—I am looking for a body—

MAN. Well, is it me you want?

BET. Yes—No.—I want a—a—a—O lawks!—
—it's a—How do you call it?—a—

MAN. Call what?

BET. I don't know—It's a man—a—man—a—

MAN. Manager, I suppose.

BET. Yes, yes, that's it !

MAN. I am he.

BET. Lawks, what a funny man !—Are you a manager ?

MAN. I am.

BET. Why I declare you are just like another man.

MAN. (*Aside.*) What a simpleton ! Well, my dear, what do you want with me ?

BET. Nothing.

MAN. Well, but you didn't come here for nothing ?

BET. No, I come from the country three days ago—I wants to be hired.

MAN. Oh, you come to know if I want a maid-servant ?

BET. O lawks ! no,—I don't want to be a servant—I—a—I—that—he ! he ! he !

MAN. I—a—I—that—What the devil do you want ?—who are you ?

BET. I live with my grand-aunt, Goody Stubbins, a little way off in the country.

MAN. Indeed !

BET. Yes—he ! he ! I'm no fool—he ! he ! he !

MAN. That's more than I'll swear for.

BET. (*Playing with his coat.*) What a pretty coat—he, he, he !

MAN. Will you be quiet ?—and, if you can, tell me what's your business here ?

BET. He, he, he !—I wants—I wants to act—he, he, he !

MAN. To what ?

BET. To act. My cousin acts all the great parts at the Lun-nun show-shop.—She gave me a ticket to see it.—Lawks ! what a pure place it was—what a many people—and fiddlers that play all together, and make such a noise ! and then the people come on and sing—and say this, and that, and t'other—and then my cousin she came on, and wanted to be married to such a sweet young gentleman—but his father wouldn't let him at first—but at last he did, and then every body went away so happy. He, he, he !

MAN. And you were vastly pleased, I dare say.

BET. He, he, he!—yes. And then I asked cousin, if I should be at the wedding—and she said it was all sham, and that she did so every night, and got such a deal of money by it.

MAN. And do you want to act?

BET. He, he, he! Yes, if you please, sir,—I want to sham too.

MAN. You can't be serious.—To act in comedy, requires—*(with great consequence.)*

BET. No, no, tragedy! summut about “He call Roller husband—I call Roller father.” And summut about my child, and—

MAN. Have you a good study?

BET. He, he, he! What's that?

MAN. I mean, can you learn your lesson well?

BET. Yes, purely.—I know by heart all the story of Giles Scroggins and Molly Brown. *(Sings.)*

Giles Scroggins courted Molly Brown,
Fol deriddle lol, fol deriddle lido;
The fairest maid in all our town,
Fol deriddle lol, &c.
He bought her a ring with poesy true,
If you loves I as I loves you,
No knife can cut our loves in two.
Fol deriddle lol, &c.

MAN. *(Interrupting her.)* There, that will do,—that's quite enough.

BET. It's a sweet song, isn't it? And there's a gentleman who courts my cousin, says as how he'll teach me any thing. He's coming to speak to you about it.

MAN. He need not trouble himself—my company is full; and you would be of no service, unless to play idiots.

BET. And won't you have me? *(Crying.)* Why then you are a nasty, ugly old man. I'll cry myself to death, that's what I will,—and when I'm dead, my ghost shall haunt you as Giles Scroggins's did Molly Brown. I will be a actress. O! O! O—h! *[Exit crying.]*

MAN. Poor girl! *(Mimics her.)* I want to act. Ha, ha, ha! I have seen many ridiculous pretenders to the art, but never one so headstrong as this. A gawky from the country—don't know a word of English, and wants to play high tragedy. *(Mimics her.)* “Than I call Roller husband—he call Roller father.” Ha, ha, ha!—a pretty Cora indeed!

Re-enter Lady, as FLOURISH, dressed very affectedly; an eye-glass, reticule, &c. She looks at the Manager thro' the eye-glass with a bold and impudent air.

FLO. (Enters speaking.) The door to the left, you say—very well. Oh, are you the man they call the manager?

MAN. Yes, madam. (Aside.) By my honour she's a bold one.

FLO. Glad to meet you. You don't know me?

MAN. No, madam.

FLO. So much the worse for you.—I am an actress of some consequence on the London boards.

MAN. Madam, I—(With great ceremony.)

FLO. Don't talk.—I am not come to solicit an engagement—it's a very unusual thing for me to go in search of a manager.—I never make the first advances.

MAN. Certainly not, madam.—It is a manager's duty to solicit such great talent as—

FLO. Don't talk. If you mean that as a compliment—it's very clumsily done,

MAN. Your pardon, madam. I was going to say—

FLO. Don't talk. I have a cousin, a young woman lately come from the country.

MAN. Oh, then you are—

FLO. Don't talk. She's an idiot, a simpleton, who can neither read, write, speak, or talk; and who has taken it into her head to be an actress.

MAN. She has just left the room—

FLO. I know it. She told you she was to be instructed by a young gentleman.

MAN. She did; and—

FLO. I know it. A word with you, sir;—that young man is my intended husband.

MAN. (Aside.) Poor young man.

FLO. (Sharply.) What's that you say?

MAN. (Bowing.) Enviable man.

FLO. (Courtesying.) Oh! He is young, handsome, and witty—but light, fickle, and has a thousand defects, as all men have.

MAN. All! madam?

FLO. (*Imitating him.*) All! sir.

MAN. You judge our sex rather severely.

FLO. Not at all—not at all. I have not studied so long but I know these things. You take me, I suppose, for one of those giddy extravagant flirts, that—

MAN. D——she's mad!

FLO. What's that you say, sir,—mad! have I the appearance of one deranged? Sir, you may thank your stars that I am naturally mild and timid,—I sometimes get into a passion, and then wo to him that dare's resist me.

AIR.

Timid, mild, my temper, when I my way,
'Tis said, in all things have;
Oppose me but a little—then, sir, say,
Who dare my fury brave?

MAN. Say what you will—do what you will—I'll not oppose you, madam.

FLO. Then, sir, I shall return to the purpose of my visit, and to the young man of whom I spoke to you. He will wait on you, and solicit you to take my idiot of a cousin into your company. The interest he takes in this young girl I suspect, and justly—let it suffice to tell you that I wish, and *insist*, that you refuse all his solicitations.

MAN. Madam, you shall be obeyed. (*Aside.*) I wish she'd go.

FLO. Don't talk.—I know they'll try to bribe you to their interest—but don't listen to them.

MAN. I won't.

FLO. Resist all their entreaties.

MAN. I shall.

FLO. Refuse all their bribes.

MAN. I will.

FLO. Attend to me.

MAN. I do.

FLO. Comply with my request.

MAN. Yes.

FLO. And command my services for a few nights in your new speculation.

MAN. (*Elated.*) Madam! I—

FLO. Disobey me, and—

[Exit, singing part of the air “Timid, mild, my temper, &c.”]

MAN. By my honour, it requires very little study to enable you to play the shrews; an untamed Catherine.—No wonder at a manager’s losing his temper, when he has such turbulent ones as these to deal with.—However, had I meant otherwise, it is to my interest to comply with her request,—a London actress of her consequence will give eclat to my proceedings.

Enter *Lady*, as MRS. STUBBINS, met by the manager.

MAN. Well, what do *you* want?

MRS. S. Eh!—no—I’ll not sit down, I thank you—I’m not tired; a little hard of hearing or so—

MAN. Who are you?

MRS. S. Eh!—oh—yes, I know she has been here—the dear girl. But I hope you won’t take her from me and make her a player.

MAN. Oh, then, I suppose this is Mrs. Stubbins, the grand-aunt of that stupid young idiot that has given me so much trouble—the fool—

MRS. S. No, she never went to school—I learnt her all myself—and a notable clever body it was, till this play-acting got into her head.—To be sure what’s bred in the bone you know—I was fond of it myself when I was a young woman.

MAN. Madam, I have a great deal to do, and would be obliged by your absence.

MRS. S. Eh!—Oh—yes, I got a great deal of applause.—One of the actors became enamoured of me too—a sweet young man, as like you, as two peas—handsome soul!—(*Courting the Manager.*) The figure so like—so elegant—so witty—so engaging;—had you but seen how he expressed his love, elegant youth!—so—so—ho! ho! oh!

(*Faints in the Manager’s arms.*)

MAN. Ma’am—madam! what the devil is she at?

MRS. S. (*Recovering.*) Where am I?—Do these dear arms enfold me?—extatic thought!

MAN. D——but I wish she’d take her tambourine face somewhere else. Madam, will you depart?

MRS. S. No—we’ll never part—I can still be useful to you, for when young I was very partial to the drama.

MAN. Oh ! she's cracked !

MRS. S. The last time I appeared on the stage, I played Statira.

MAN. Statira ! This conduct is new to me.

MRS. S. Eh !—yes. I don't think that I should do for that part now.

MAN. No—nor I neither.

MRS. S. Don't look so lovely—don't, you gay deceiver—I can't bear it. Why will you cause my heart to flutter so ?

MAN. Flutter and be hanged, for what I care. I wish you'd go.

MRS. S. Oh ! there's no resisting you—take my hand, which I for eighty years have kept, as the great Roman warrior said,—

‘ Chaste as the icicle

That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple.’

I'll go and prepare my wedding dress, and return with the wings of love. But I cannot go without one embrace.

[*She embraces him.*

SONG—MRS. S.

Extatic lovely pangs that beat within my breast,
Ah cease, ah cease awhile, and let a maiden rest ;
O Cupid, god of love, I own thy sov'reign sway,
My gentle, tender heart, alas ! is stole away.

Faddle laddle litum, faddle liddle litum,
Faddle laddle litum, faddle liddle de.

Love's glances from my eyes, have pierced you to the heart,
You with sighs your flame reveal—it would be death to part ;
Though the world may scoff, their taunting may pass free,
For I'm the maid he loves, and he's the man for me.

Faddle laddle litum, &c.

(*Drops letter.*)

[*Exit.*

MAN. An amorous old tabby—her wedding dress !—Well, this beats all in my remembrance—I have often heard of the follies of youth, but this is reversing the picture with a vengeance. Thank heaven, before she can make the necessary arrangements for the awful event she thinks awaits her, I shall be many miles removed from her, and her ‘ faddle laddle litum de.’ [*Sees letter.* What have we here—a letter—and addressed to my wife—

“ My dear Love,

I have no opinion of your plan; your husband will discover you in your first disguise. But if you can deceive him in the country girl, whose manners assimilate with your own, when in the buoyancy of spirit you give loose to mirth—in Flourish, Goody Stubbins, and the Broom Girl, you may defy detection.”

So, so, with all my boasted sagacity I am deceived, and agreeably so, for now, assured of the sterling versatility of *her* talent, and zealous in the exertion of my own, I am certain of success: and when the indulgent breath of kindness has wafted my adventurous bark safe into the wished-for haven of your approbation, then with a throb of exultation I shall say

Our task is done.—Inspired by *the cause*,
We've toiled with ardour for your kind applause;
The prize is ours—our children bless your name,
Young, artless aspirants for Thespian fame :
Husband and wife, feel yet one tribute due,
An endless debt of gratitude to you.

But what says the letter of her last disguise?—a Broom Girl, eh—and egad here she comes—she has been my companion through many happy years—and I will not brush from her when she wants my assistance in a broom. [Exit.]

(The Lady then *enters* as a Broom Girl, and sings a verse, when the Gentleman *re-enters* as a Bavarian Girl, and the piece ends with the duet of “Buy a Broom.”)

“*Doubt and Conviction*” is a spirited translation of “*Defiance et Malice*.” It has another English dress under the title of “*Personation*,” but the adaptor of this piece has made Lady Julia assume the disguise of a French housekeeper, and the feigned Laroche and Jacqueline jabber broken English, when “native and to the manner born” they would naturally converse in pure French. Nature and consistency are, however, too frequently sacrificed to effect!

From the difficulty in obtaining my copy, I presume “*Doubt and Conviction*” is nearly, if not quite out of print; and as it is rare, and of more worth than translations in general, its insertion may be acceptable to my readers.

DOUBT AND CONVICTION.

LADY JULIA. (*Entering with a letter.*) London postmark and the Earl's superscription.—Let me see what my good uncle has to communicate, (*breaking it open*) and why my dear cousin Henry was not the bearer of his father's missive. (*Reading.*)

“ If I am not mistaken, my charming niece, you will have been, “ ere this can reach you, in anxious expectation of seeing my son “ Henry, to whom you have promised your hand immediately on “ his arrival. In fact, he is upon the point of setting out ; but “ I trust that the wings of love will, on this occasion, be outstrip “ by the mail-coach, as I have to communicate to you the wildest “ project that ever entered a young man's brain. Lord Henry, “ you know, notwithstanding the thousand good qualities which “ have made a little havock in your little bosom, my dearest “ niece, has some pretensions to be considered a bit of a philoso-“ pher.”—A philosopher of two and twenty ! Ha, ha, ha !—

“ After three years absence, on public service, from his country “ and from you, Julia, he seems desirous to discover whether “ that absence (which appears an age to him I can truly assure “ you) and the absolute disposal which you have had of your “ time and fortune during almost half that period, have operated “ any change in those amiable qualities which have gained his “ affections.”—My poor dear cousin !—“ In a word, I can dis-“ cover that he thinks he owes to what he calls his principles, a “ secret scrutiny into your disposition, mode of life, and into the “ true state of your heart.”—A secret scrutiny ! by what strange fatality is one brought to love—a man ?—Well, well,—let me see.—“ Fancying himself not likely to be readily known, espe-“ cially in—disguise !—after so long an absence in foreign climes, “ he means to present himself to you under the dress and name of “ his own travelling servant Laroche.”—What a conspiracy !—

“ The choice of the character was suggested by the reports which “ have reached him of a certain chattering and purblind Pris-“ cilla,”—Priscilla !—“ to whom you have confided the domestic “ management of your rural retreat. You will see at once, my “ dearest niece, that he builds greatly upon the communicative “ disposition and gossiping tales of this old woman. Divert “ yourself a little at his extravagancies, and by your milder influ-“ ence effect his cure ; for these purposes alone I reveal them to “ you, being well assured that your heart will readily excuse a “ fault which Henry never would commit did he not set the “ highest value on the felicity which awaits him.”—So, so, so, my dearest cousin, you must have a secret scrutiny, must you,

and gossips' tales?—Well—you shall have them. O that I could devise some new stratagem.—What a thing it is that I should have neglected my reading in this manner—I have not a novel in the world!—But my cousin's own contrivance will furnish me, perhaps.—Can the man who fancies it so easy a task to dupe others without detection become dupe enough in his turn—why not?—If his predominant passions can at once be set at work, they may so blind him—some one comes—O, it is he, I vow!

LORD HENRY. (*Running in, dressed in a large drab great coat, and belt, dirty boots and spurs, a long tailed powdered wig, ruffles, a fur travelling cap, covering part of his face, a coloured handkerchief round his neck, and a whip in his hand.*) *Enfin, ma Foi* (Stopping short.) *Mille pardons, madame* (*Bowing respectfully*).

JUL. Who did you want, friend?

HEN. *Excus-e me, madame; I am Milord Henry's most' umble servant; I arrive only dis moment.*

JUL. (*With affected coldness*.) With Lord Henry?

HEN. *Helas! non, madame. He vas fly on de ving of Cupid-e to trow him at your knee—bot 'is cursed viskey turn ovair!*—

JUL. (*Coldly*.) Overturned!

HEN. *Ovairtorn,—fracassée!—Al brok en leetel bit!*

JUL. (*Coldly*.) Broken to pieces!

HEN. *En tousan pièce! So, madame, malgré—spite of 'is' urry to kiss-e de vite hand of Miladi, (Bowing) he could no' com no fordair den de village vere de accident arrive.*

JUL. (*Aside*.) Tells a lie with a tolerable grace for—a—philosopher!

HEN. (*Aside*.) Don't seem much moved at the accident—for a bride!

JUL. (*Aside*.) I see he is hurt at my affected indifference; all goes well.

HEN. (*Aside*.) She does not know me; I have fair game.

JUL. So then, Lord Henry—bless me, how cool the evenings are getting!—Lord Henry will be detained some days at this village?

HEN. *Verily, Miladi, I am ignorant—* (*Aside*.) How she freezes me!

JUL. He must have received a great shock?

HEN. (*Emphatically.*) *Very great-e shock endeed, Miladi.*

JUL. I hope he does not feel any other inconvenience from his present situation ?

HEN. *Non, madame ; he vil soon-e be cure of his vound.*

JUL. (*Vacantly.*) His wound ! O dear, I'll send directly—

HEN. *Do not derange you, Miladi, he vil get de bettair be you sure.*

JUL. (*Pointedly.*) But are you certain that his *head* is sound ?

HEN. *Thès certain ; tis very sonde, I ansair for dat.*

JUL. (*Aside.*) 'Tis more than I do. (*To him.*) I had my fears on that score. But, return to your master with all speed ; paint to him in true and lively colours what an effect your story had upon me ; how deeply I am afflicted ;—what is your name, friend ?

HEN. *Je m'appelle—I cal myself-e Laroche, madame.*

JUL. A good honest fellow, I dare say ; Laroche, here is a guinea for you. Don't forget to tell your master how much his mischance overwhelms me. You feel very sincerely for poor Lord Henry, I am sure ?

HEN. *I feel—much more dan I can express-e, Miladi ; and I shou'd be charmé to obey de command of Miladi, and retorn-e to comfort-e my mastair vid de intelligence of de tendair interét she have shew for 'im ;—bot—he ordair me to vait 'im here.*

JUL. (*Affecting embarrassment.*) To wait for him here ?

HEN. (*Eagerly observing her.*) *Oui, Miladi.*

JUL. Well (*Affecting to recover herself.*) you must e'en wait then. (*Pretending to hesitate with herself.*) But if—if he should come—I much fear—

HEN. (*Eagerly stepping forward.*) *Vat-e you fear, Miladi ?*

JUL. That—it will weary you to wait if he should be long in coming. Besides—a most urgent affair,—an elegant entertainment at a neighbouring seat, calls me from home for some days, and I take all my servants with me. It happens very awkwardly, to be sure ; but why should I hesitate ?—Lord Henry is so reasonable and considerate,—he cannot possibly feel hurt that I should punctually fulfil so important an engagement.

HEN. (*Endeavouring in vain to conceal his vexation.*) *Au contraire, madame ;—'is tendairness vil be mush flattair, certainement.*

JUL. No doubt; I have made up my mind to go; but we shall be able to give you a corner somewhere, Laroche.

HEN. *I do not merit all your goodness-e, Miladi.*

JUL. You will settle matters with the housekeeper. She is a maiden gentlewoman, 'tis true, but will take good care of Laroche; never fear. (*Going.*) I will send her to you. (*Affectionately.*) Poor Lord Henry! I do so feel—(*Looking at her watch*) bless me, I have very little time to *dress*!—I do so feel for his present situation you have no notion! (*Goes out through the folding doors.*)

HEN. (*Bowing very low until she is out of sight.*) But I have a notion! I am lost in amazement! What! at a moment when I was expected here to enter into the most sacred engagement with her, a frivolous pastime can so captivate her fancy,—make her forget—and what a reception! How find an excuse for that negligent and chilling manner in which she listened to a recital that should have drawn forth tears?—I verily believe that to have made any impression on her marble heart, I should have told her of a broken arm at the very least! Ah—what airy bubbles women are!—Yet—the ladies—will not be suspected!—'Tis a crime, without benefit of clergy, not to repose the most implicit faith in them! (*Walking to and fro in great agitation.*) Lady Julia, Lady Julia! frivolous—faithless females!—Well, well, well—I had judged solidly of this frothy moiety of the human race!—To DOUBT is to be wise,—CONVICTION follows. My stratagem was conceived in wisdom: and I think I may congratulate myself both upon the plan and execution; and, but for this disguise, I should have made a fine fool of myself here! Since I have made so good a beginning, faithful to my project, let me see it to an end; I'll watch my lady-fair narrowly; interrogate this Priscilla whom she is sending to me,—probe the old maid to the quick! When I stoop to dissimulation, it shall be for some purpose, and by hook or by crook, *Laroche* may find out what *Lord Henry* might have discovered—*too late*!

JUL. (*Returning with a short hurried step, and dressed in a flounced apron, going all round her, made very stiff to increase her size; a black silk cloak and hood; a winged cap, and grey silk bonnet, from which a row of grey locks and a toupee project; deep triple ruffles; black mittens; green spectacles; and a bunch of keys at her side; assuming a sharp broken voice, and great volubility.*) Ah, sir, you are here; my lady has just given orders and directions about you; I come to execute them with every possible degree of promptitude, alacrity, and despatch; and to

express to you, sir, how very truly and sincerely I feel the greatest pleasure and satisfaction in performing the offices and functions of my post, charge, and avocation, upon so interesting and captivating an occasion. (*Courtesies very low.*)

HEN. (*Aside.*) Here's a whirlwind ! (*To her.*) *O, my 'eart is pénétré vid-e your goodness-e, madame.* (*Bows.*)

JUL. (*Prudishly.*) "Madam !" give me leave to observe that you bestow upon me, sir, an appellation at which my wounded modesty—

HEN. *O, pardon, mademoiselle—pardon-e me, miss.*

JUL. To be sure it has depended entirely on myself, more than once, to have become entitled to it,—but—fate is so fantastic,—and a choice so difficult to make ! You know, sir, what feminine timidity is,—unpractised in the ways of the world,—apprehensive of juvenile indiscretions;—so, sir, by my own free choice, I am still—a maid, (*Courtesies.*) at your service, sir.

HEN. *By your own free shioce, sans doute, miss.* (*Aside.*) And by that of every body else.

JUL. Entirely ; and therefore—but, dear me, how thoughtless I am ! I stand here prattling like an infant, and forget that you need some refreshment after your journey.

HEN. *O, Miss, de sight of your charm-e suffice.*

JUL. (*Putting her hand on his mouth*) Enough, enough, I am yours again directly. (*Goes out again*)

HEN. Ah!—I breathe again ! One would swear that she had preserved her virginity purposely to perplex me with it at such a juncture. However, having assumed the character of Laroche, I must e'en go through with it ; and as the creature seems to have a liquorish tooth left—

JUL. (*Returning as the old woman, with a salver of sandwiches, decanters and glasses.*) Come, come, sit down, sit you down.

HEN. *O, I am ashame of you for al dis troble—*

JUL. Not at all, not at all. Come, come, a little Madeira. I govern this family, and you may safely rely on eating and drinking of the best.

HEN. *Charmante Miss-e Priscilla !*

JUL. Goodness ! what a look !—"Tis he !

HEN. (*Alarmed.*) *He ! Vat he ?*

JUL. His very face !

HEN. (*More alarmed.*) *Of voom-e speak-e you, Miss?*

JUL. Alas! sir—of a jealous, a suspicious lover of mine—the traitor! one who long adored me, one whom I loved perhaps too well; just such a countenance as yours, sir.

HEN. *It greatly flattair me, certainement, to resemble to something-e Miss have love. But, ah!—(Tenderly.) dere be von destinée dat I envy more!*

JUL. Pray, sir—one more glass of Madeira.

HEN. *Should-e ve no do vel to.* (*Taking her hand.*)

JUL. (*Affectionately.*) Ah!—

HEN. *You gouverne Miladi your Mistresse, moi, I serve Milord voo I munage as I vil; dey be go marry demselves immédiatement, ven you vil see your Mistresse 'appy—*

JUL. Ah! the sight of happiness is very captivating, no doubt. But, dear sir, do you really believe this marriage so very certain?

HEN. *Irrevocable. Do ve no com en poste from London for de mariage?*

JUL. (*Shaking her head.*) True, true, very true; but—

HEN. *Bot—vat-e, ma belle Demoiselle?*

JUL. But—one sees so many strange things that one is sorry to see; such dissimulation.

HEN. *Endeed!*

JUL. Are you, between ourselves, sure now that your master himself uses no disguise?

HEN. *No disguise vid-e me at al.*

JUL. It is reported here (*Drawing her chair closer to him*) that he is apt to be jealous, suspicious—

HEN. *Sos-pi—Sometime, sometime.*

JUL. Ay, ay;—it is rumoured, too, that he has taken it into his head—he! he! he! he!—to call his defects—philosophy!

HEN. *De la philosophie? Oui—(Forcing a smile to conceal his vexation.) O, oui,—my mustair do tink him a litel philosophie.*

JUL. Ay, ay, so much the worse, so much the worse!

HEN. *So mosh de vors-e, mademoiselle?*

JUL. Yes,—(*Confidentially.*) it has come to Lady Julia's ear, and from very good authority; and I shrewdly suspect that she has taken her arrangements accordingly.

HEN. *Ses arrangemens !*

JUL. Yes, my heart ; (*Gravely.*) a prudent woman endeavours to wean her affection from the man who has a doubt of her fidelity, and who fancies himself too superior a being to make her a happy one.

HEN. *A la vérité—to say de trute—I pairceive dat Milord had no dat ascendancy—dat pouvoir upon Miladi's 'cart,—de manière she receive me !*

JUL. I did not dare ask you about it.

HEN. *And dis abrupt-e départ ven Milord—*

JUL. (*Rising from table.*) Hush !—

HEN. (*Following her.*) Comment ?

JUL. (*Whispering.*) You are very much in the way here.

HEN. (*Forgetting himself.*) Very much in the way !

JUL. (*Rapidly.*) My dear, dear Mr. Laroche, I very seldom give myself any trouble or concern about other people's affairs and business ; but I have so particular and peculiar a regard and consideration for you,—and you appear so discreet—

HEN. (*Eagerly.*) *Très discrèt. Say, say—ma chere Priscilla ?*

JUL. (*Turning to the table.*) Another little drop of my cordial ?

HEN. *Non—non—continuez—I vant-e no cordial.* (*Aside.*) I'm in despair ! (*To her.*) *So dis abrupte départ, den—*

JUL. Was a pretext—

HEN. *To get me go away, sans doute ?*

JUL. You have it. (*Putting her arm round his neck, and whispering in his ear.*) My young Lady expects here to night—

HEN. (*Eagerly.*) *Un amant—a lovair ?*

JUL. (*Nodding her head, and tapping him on the shoulder.*) You—know—what—a young lady expects—

HEN. (*Aside.*) O, heavens ! (*To her.*) *But vat-e man is he ?*

JUL. That is precisely what I am striving to find out. But—he comes hither unattended—in disguise.

HEN. *Déguisé !*

JUL. The disguise is used for the purpose of deceiving you ; no greater precaution was thought necessary with a servant.

HEN. (*Aside.*) *Perfidious woman !*

JUL. Hey ?—

HEN. Noting-e, noting. (*Aside—seeking for a pretext to get away.*) Did not think greater precaution necessary with a servant.

JUL. Bless me! (*Pulling him round*) If my green glasses don't deceive me, you look pale! Has my cordial put you out of sorts?

HEN. Non, non. (*Looking over the garden.*) But voo I see com down de road?—it is Milord!

JUL. (*Pretending great alarm.*) Lord Henry, your master?

HEN. Oui, c'est lui. Excusez, Miss, excus-e me. (*Runs out.*)

JUL. Run, run, my dear cousin, or you will lose sight of Lord Henry! O, ho, ho, ho! these men! How they torment themselves with phantoms of their own creating! But I thought this cousin of mine more cunning, I confess; to come complaisantly and teach his mistress how far she may deceive a jealous husband! Ah!—here he comes again; he has thrown off his disguise, but will not be himself again for one while, I fancy.

HEN. (*Speaking without, in his natural voice.*) Let the rest of the servants return to the inn.

JUL. The rest of the servants!

HEN. As for you, Laroche, be at hand (*Entering, elegantly dressed.*) I may want your assistance.

JUL. (*Aside.*) Very likely you may,

HEN. (*Turning towards her, petishly.*) Good woman, do you belong to the house?

JUL. (*In her assumed voice.*) 'Tis now two years, three months, five days—

HEN. (*Angrily.*) A truce with dates.—I am Lord Henry.

JUL. (*Courtesying.*) Ah, my Lord—

HEN. Be quick, and announce me to your Lady.

JUL. It is highly flattering to me, my Lord, to be, upon such an occasion, my Lady's own principal—

HEN. Go then.

JUL. Yes, my Lord; but as I pride myself upon the more scrupulous etiquette—

HEN. What then?

JUL. I am apprehensive—

HEN. Is your Lady in the house?

JUL. Ye—s, yes, my Lord,—that is to say—no.

HEN. Yes, no.

JUL. She was upon the point of setting out to a neighbouring seat, and I don't know how far she—

HEN. Furies ! Without tormenting me any longer go and see then.

JUL. Yes, my Lord. (*Courtesies, and goes out.*)

HEN. Her agitation is natural, very natural. Poor creatures ! the worst of servitude must be to aid in carrying on such reprehensible intrigues ! But I will counteract their execrable plot. So, so, so, it was not thought necessary to use great precaution with a *servant* ! Well,—we shall see whether the *master* is to be treated with the same audacity. O thou happy and fertile invention of mine, how much I have to thank thee ! My project has no small degree of merit, I flatter myself ; and I need not fear, thank heaven, being outwitted by any body. We shall see this cautious rival who takes so much pains to disguise himself ;—the coward ! and Lady Julia to have a regard for such a fellow ! But my arrival must be announced by this time. How the ungrateful creature must be agitated ; how she will tremble in my presence ! I really pity her—but away such weakness from my breast.—Ah, she is here.

JUL. (*Returning, elegantly dressed, speaking in her natural voice, in the most affectionate manner.*) Welcome,—welcome, my dearest cousin ; you restore me to happiness.

HEN. It is highly flattering, madam—

JUL. O, do not use so cold a term to me ; I am your cousin, and soon, dearest Henry, shall be—This shocking accident of yours had so agitated me—Laroche, no doubt, informed you.

HEN. (*Sarcastically.*) He did.

JUL. It quite overwhelmed me ; and, had he not dissuaded me, I should have flown to give you consolation. But are you quite *yourself* again ? Ah, do not deceive me ; if you knew the sufferings of a tender heart !—Tell me, Henry—

HEN. Be under no uneasiness. (*Aside.*) What assurance !

JUL. You are restored to me at last, then ! Ah, my ardent affection made me think that this propitious day would never come.

HEN. (*Aside*) O, this is too much !

JUL. Why—Henry ?—You look—quite thoughtful !

HEN. (*Aside.*) What unparalleled dissimulation !

JUL. O, for mercy's sake, dearest Henry, dispel the gloom that clouds your brow. You should bring joy and happiness to your Julia; your absence has but too long left me a prey to melancholy.

HEN. To—melancholy!

JUL. Indeed it has. Buried in this solitude—

HEN. I had judged, from the relation of Laroche, very differently of this retreat; I was once taught indeed to think that you had chosen retirement in tenderness to me; but he informed me of a brilliant entertainment that—

JUL. True.

HEN. And it was this evening, if I am not mistaken, that you were to go—

JUL. I was going; but now (*tenderly*) I stay. My desire to kill time is at an end.

HEN. I should be very sorry that any expected pleasure—

JUL. O, be not uneasy; I lose nothing I promise you. One yields sometimes to the importunities of a neighbour; but fashionable entertainments, such as now infect even the country, where a crowd is collected without friendship, and almost without discrimination, have no charms for me, I do assure you.

HEN. Such tumultuous scenes are little calculated indeed to captivate an admirer of Nature's unsophisticated charms; a heart formed for purer pleasures; a heart as impossible to be allured by deceitful appearances, as incapable of deceiving; a heart—

JUL. In a word, like yours and mine, Henry, for I believe we can answer for each others.

HEN. (*Drily.*) Let every body answer for their own.

JUL. How!

HEN. Lady Julia, I am frank; and women—

JUL. (*Ironically.*) Have hearts incapable of such refined enjoyments?—And you men would, no doubt, arrogate to yourselves *philosophy* too?—

HEN. O, for mercy's sake, let us spare philosophy a gross affront! Between a woman and a sage there can be but little affinity.

JUL. You think so?

HEN. Unfortunately I know it by recent experience. Had the gift of thinking with justness, and of acting justly, been blended

with feminine attractions, mankind would be too much blessed. Nature has been careful not to spoil her children by any such indulgence.

JUL. You have, at any rate, as little indulgence as herself. And can you, Henry, mistake for superior sense a caustic sarcasm?

HEN. O, no, a virtuous mind abhors its malignant suggestions; believe me, I know how to appreciate it. The world, Lady Julia, is full of error; of what avail is declamation? Every one feels full well how much easier a task it is to criticise what is wrong than to do what is right. O, the wisdom of whom I am the votary is not austere, she does not wound but enlightens; the woman whom she inspires remains almost unconscious even of her own charms, till love, virtuous love, reveals them; she does not aspire to those conquests which cold coquettes obtain and are deprived of every hour; faithful to her duty, (*Emphatically*) faithful to her vows, she never varnishes her sentiments, or makes a cruel use of the ascendency she has obtained; she neither practices or knows the art of concealing under flowers whose fragrance captivates our senses, a thorn to plunge into our feeling hearts; nor triumphing in our despair, adds the shafts of ridicule to those already rankling in our hearts, and go, in wanton sport, to torture another victim. By these unflattered features, Lady Julia, do you know *many* female philosophers?

JUL. Full as many, Lord Henry, as are necessary to match with male philosophers like you, thank heaven, without defect. But—(*Turning suddenly about and affecting to listen.*)

HEN. (*Listening too.*) What?—

JUL. Did not I hear a carriage draw up?

HEN. Some company?

JUL. Yes, it is they; importunate visitors!

HEN. Well—(*Presenting his hand.*) We must go and receive them.

JUL. O, no—do not you—do not you expose yourself to be fatigued by such guests. There's the prudish Miss Shunman,—the Reverend Doctor Rivet,—that unwearied but wearying politician Canvas,—the censorious Lady Sarah Surmise,—and—the Honourable (*Affecting embarrassment.*) the Honourable Edward Eastdale.

HEN. (*Remark ing it.*) What—(*Strictly observing her.*) that young fop, the greatest coxcomb in the county?

JUL. Speak a little less severely of one whom I—esteem.

HEN. (*Aside.*) That's the man ! I guessed as much.

JUL. Eastdale has his merit—

HEN. O, sublime !

JUL. And if he came alone he would meet a very different reception.

HEN. No doubt on't.

JUL. (*Very tenderly.*) To be all your own, my dear cousin, to owe my happiness to you alone, I will go and contrive to get rid of these intruders. Meantime—go and take a turn in the little wood ; I will meet you there ; you recollect, no doubt, Henry, how pleasantly its winding walks and fragrant bowers can lull a lover's anxious mind to soothing reveries ? Go, to the little wood (*Going, kisses her hand to him.*) to the little wood. (*Goes out.*)

HEN. To the little wood !—To the little wood !—There to loiter patiently along the winding walks, while the perfidious—damn the little wood ! Was ever man so treated by a false deceitful woman ? I will shew no more weakness,—feel no more regret,—but break this instant from my shameful bondage ; reason, philosophy, love, love itself, tells me,—ah, it too plainly tells me, that I doat upon her still ! Is not her wit, her beauty, her understanding, all ?—What—can I—I ever pardon her ? Can I so far dishonour a *philosopher* ! But, on the other hand, what compels me to put up with this outrage ? What compels me patiently to suffer a trifling coxcomb to rob me with impunity of my earthly happiness ? No, no,—rather let me give vent to the transports of rage that rise within my breast ! Rather let me revenge myself on the ungrateful creature !—I'll kill this coxcomb of a rival, or perish by his hand !—Yes, I'll kill him ; and when he is no more—(*Lady Julia, again dressed as the old woman, peeps through the folding doors, pretending to be watching Lord Henry, but, purposely, in so awkward a manner as to be perceived by him.*) Well—what's the matter ?—

JUL. (*Pretending to be greatly alarmed.*) Nothing, my Lord, nothing.

HEN. (*Seizing hold of her hand and bringing her forward.*) Unavailing subterfuge ! What are you doing here ? Are you set as a spy upon me ? Speak.

JUL. Lack-a-day, my Lord, you'll break my virgin arm !

HEN. You came to see whether I was gone to the little wood.

JUL. Dear, my Lord—

JUL. Believe me, my Lord, it goes to my heart to torture your Lordship in this manner, but—your future peace is at stake.

HEN. It is, it is! And this lover is, no doubt,—disguised.

JUL. No, my Lord, no; he is not disguised now; your sudden arrival produced a change;—the disguise was not likely to impose upon your Lordship; he is dressed as—as you are.

HEN. I understand; thrown off all constraint! Well, what have they done with him?

JUL. Ah, my Lord—

HEN. What an agitation you are in! Where is he, I say?

JUL. He is—at this moment, with—her Ladyship.

HEN. With her Ladyship! Alone?

JUL. Quite alone.

HEN. Furies!—What—you—you saw her with him?

JUL. As plain as I see myself with your Lordship.

HEN. O—I can doubt no longer!—But—proceed—I pray;—did you see—nothing else?

JUL. O dear me, yes. The scene was truly curious; he, for his part, was quite in a rage.

HEN. In a rage! And wherefore?

JUL. He had taken it into his head that he had a rival.

HEN. Ah, I rejoice to hear it! He has, he has, a dangerous rival; and he shall soon feel the whole weight of his revenge.

JUL. Ah, my Lord, your violent passions make me tremble! Besides—I vow, as far as I was able to judge, he did not appear to be quite in his—senses.

HEN. He is a fool.

JUL. Your Lordship knows him!

HEN. His name is Eastdale. The Honourable Edward Eastdale. I'll tent his *Honour* to the quick!

JUL. Eastdale! I thought that he was a relative of Lady Julia.

HEN. Never mind what you thought; I assure you of the fact; confide in my penetration; Lady Julia could not deceive me a moment.

JUL. Your Lordship's penetration confounds me.

HEN. Do you come to see whether I am in the little wood ?

JUL. O, my Lord, you alarm me beyond expression !

HEN. Compose yourself—compose yourself, Priscilla, Laroche has told me all.

JUL. Laroche !

HEN. Yes, yes ; I know the projects of Lady Julia ;—I am her dupe.

JUL. It amazes me, my Lord, to hear you say so.

HEN. I tell you that Laroche, faithful to his master, indignant as you are at such shameless perfidy, has told me all.

JUL. O, I am quite beside myself, my Lord !

HEN. Fear nothing, I tell you, fear nothing. Laroche is in love with you ; he has communicated his passion for you to me ; and I approve it.

JUL. Ah, what a charming fellow, what a treasure you have in that Laroche, my Lord ! I had the greatest difficulty to conceal my regard for him the very moment he entered, I assure you, my Lord ; but I am sure your Lordship will approve my affected indifference.

HEN. Enough, enough ; I will take care of you both. But you must serve me, inform me of every thing.

JUL. Your Lordship will one day be convinced how sincerely I am attached to your Lordship.

HEN. To the point then ;—tell me all you know ; and first,—what carriage was that,—who were those visitors ?

JUL. (*Affecting embarrassment.*) Those visitors !—

HEN. Ay, this moment tell me.

JUL. Those visitors—as you call them—are—

HEN. Who, what are they ?

JUL. But one.

HEN. But one !

JUL. As sure as your Lordship stands here, one single man is all the company that has entered these walls this blessed day.

HEN. And that one—is, no doubt,—the lover ?

JUL. At least so he professes himself to be.

HEN. O, heavens !

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JUL. Your Lordship's penetration confounds me.

HEN. Don't let her think to make a dupe of me.

JUL. Certainly not, certainly not.

HEN. And her Ladyship, no doubt,—a true adept in the artifices of her sex—soothed the blockhead's fury by her tears?

JUL. No; her Ladyship seemed to—be making a jest of his jealous phrenzy.

HEN. Poor deluded wretch!

JUL. At length, however,—fearful of a discovery,—she became anxious to put an end to the interview. But it was resolved that, as soon as it should be dark, they would meet again, alone—

HEN. Good heavens!

JUL. I suppose in order to—

HEN. (*Furiously.*) To do what?

JUL. Dear me, my Lord, to—to bring matters to a close.

HEN. Julia!—At night!

JUL. They are so afraid of you,—you are so shrewd!

HEN. No, it is impossible; you deceive me. That the ungrateful Julia should forget me, I can conceive;—but—that she should so far forget *herself*—it cannot be.

JUL. What I said, my Lord, was not meant in any disparagement, heaven be praised, of Lady Julia. No, no; true and lawful wedlock.—My Lady's lawyer came hither this morning with parchments, and I suspect—

HEN. That a fool—a fop—a coxcomb—has been able to make such rapid progress in her heart as to—

JUL. One might convince you of it.

HEN. (*In a rage.*) Be it so. I take you at your word. Come—

JUL. Gracious goodness! What eyes! What fury!

HEN. (*Seizing hold of her.*) Come, come, I say.

JUL. (*Struggling.*) No, my Lord, no; it is impossible. You give me too much serious cause to fear the consequences of convincing you of Lady Julia's intentions.

HEN. (*Flinging her hand from him.*) Ah, I knew you would break your word with me.

JUL. I am a virtuous girl, my Lord, and scorn it—but you frighten me to death! I will find a way of keeping my word;—there's your faithful attendant Laroche now—

HEN. Well—what of him ?

JUL. He is in your confidence ; moreover, he is prudent, discreet ;—you will have the firmest reliance on what he shall tell you ;—I can depend on his discretion ;—I offer then to make him, my Lord, instead of you, a witness to the meeting.

HEN. Laroche ?

JUL. Laroche.

HEN. Laroche, you say ?

JUL. Why dear me, yes.

HEN. I consent to it. (*Leaving her abruptly.*) Ah—ah !—presence of mind be praised, I have her ! (*Running out on the right.*) Here, Laroche, Laroche ! (*Disappears.*)

JUL. O, ho, ho, ho ! sublime sage ! he will go and slip on Laroche's great coat again ! ah, ha, ha, ha ! my people have orders not to give him the least interruption. Now aid me mischief ! but am I not carrying the jest too far ? too far !—O, when poor women fall into the hands of jealous husbands, have they any mercy upon us ? O, no ; let me not fear then making this lesson complete.

HEN. (*Returning disguised as Laroche.*) *Milord he send-e me, Miss—*

JUL. O, my dear, dear Mr. Laroche, I have been inquiring, looking, seeking for you everywhere. How rejoiced I am to see you again ! participate in my transports.

HEN. *Je les partage. Bot-e Milord he tell-e to me somting, and he say you vas expect-e me to—*

JUL. To inform you, my heart, that there is no resisting the amiable ascendancy which you have obtained ; that I am unable to suppress the thrilling sentiments which have instilled themselves into my tender bosom ; that I have communicated all to my lady ; that she benignantly approves our mutual passion, that already her Attorney has brought—

HEN. *Sufit, suffit, enough ;—ve most-e speak of odair affaire. Milord attend from you von grand service.*

JUL. Well, I know ;—but our love—

HEN. *Ne presse pas autant,—is no sosh 'urry.*

JUL. Good Heavens ! one would think, ungrateful man, to hear you—

HEN. *Dat von fidelle servant nevair make 'is mastair vait.*

JUL. (*As in despair*) O, vain delusive dreams of bliss! I am deceived!

HEN. (*Attempting to pacify her.*) *Mais non.*

JUL. My virgin heart will break!—You do not love me!

HEN. *Mais si.* *Gaud blesse!* *I do endeed.*

JUL. O, there is an end to all!

HEN. (*Impatiently.*) *Not at all.*

JUL. Your tone—your eyes—

HEN. (*Taking hold of her by the arm, and shaking her violently, out of all patience*) *Bot-e ven Isay, mille tonnerre!* *dat I adore you!*

JUL. You adore me?—

HEN. *Eperdument believ-e me.* *Bot-e tink of my poor mastair.* *Most-e ve go?*

JUL. You need not go any where. This is the place which has been chosen as the most retired.

HEN. *En effet*—

JUL. The evening draws in so fast—I dare not be alone with you. Keep in this corner; and recollect that it will require such circumspection—

HEN. *Soyez tranquille,—I am prudent.*

JUL. I will go and get the lovely parchment from among my Lady's papers that is to make us one. Farewell.

HEN. *Sans adieu.*

JUL. Come—you may kiss the hand that is to make you blest.

HEN. (*Aside.*) O, Heavens!

JUL. Come, kiss, I say. (*He kisses it, expressing great disgust.*) And now—compose yourself. (*Goes out.*)

HEN. How is it possible to have the least command of oneself in this house?—So—this is the place appointed by the perfid creature! This is the moment marked for my revenge! Ah, it was well worth while to study Seneca,—to instil into my mind the cold morality of twenty other sages of antiquity!—What does it all avail me at this horrid moment?—They knew not, while they thought their lessons inspired by heaven itself, that the very devil was instilling into wayward woman the will and art to render them impracticable! Hush—I hear a footstep!—I can see nothing;—unlucky darkness!—however, it conceals me. Let me be all attention.—

JUL. (*Returning, still dressed as the old woman, but speaking in her natural voice, as if in consultation with herself, but purposely loud enough to be overheard by Lord Henry*) Yes,—all well considered,—it is, I believe, the wisest resolution, and every rational person will readily excuse me.—

HEN. 'Tis Julia—alone.

JUL. My lot with Lord Henry would have been too deplorable! —he is passionate,—proud of his pretended superiority,—and—he is jealous.—His suspicious disposition would a thousand times have proved the torment of my life. Eastdale, on the contrary, far from the lofty arrogance of a Philosopher,—more gentle, tender,—promises me a happier destiny.

HEN. (*Unable to contain his feelings any longer,*) Ah!—

JUL. Hark! I hear some one.—Dear Eastdale—Is it you?

HEN. (*Aside.*) Let me take advantage of her error. (*ALOUD.*) Yes—It is I.

JUL. Hush!—You have merited my fullest confidence, and—I am yours. But I think it indispensable to apprise you that I really loved this cousin to whom I was going to be united,—that he alone was ever able, till to day, to raise within my bosom that pleasing sentiment of tenderness and affection which promised to insure the lasting happiness of our lives.

HEN. (*Aside.*) O Heavens!

JUL. Ah!—wherefore has he compelled me to use dissimulation?—why has his understanding contaminated his heart?

HEN. (*Greatly agitated.*) Hear me, Lady Julia—

JUL. Silence, I pray. Salutary reflection has shewn me my danger, has taught me to appreciate your gentler disposition,—and you obtain the prize, since such you think me, predestined to a rival. The only question therefore now is how best to dispose of Lord Henry.

HEN. (*To himself, much agitated.*) How—best—to dispose of—Lord Henry!

JUL. I have reflected that the safest way, the most decorous, would be to be able to present you to him as my husband;—possibly his *philosophy* may serve him when his fate is irretrievable;—I have therefore had the marriage settlement drawn up. Go, and sign this parchment, (*takes one from her pocket, and presents it to him*) there are lights, you see, in the little chamber on the Terrace here. Go, and return immediately.

HEN. (*Aside—taking the parchment from her.*) Ah, cruel cousin—in spite of yourself—what ! can I desire a heart that bestows itself elsewhere ?—O ! what have I lost—wantonly lost ! If she knew my feelings, at this moment she might still perhaps—I'll sign however,—and she shall see, if her affections be not to be regained by a frank avowal of my errors, that I have too much honour to take advantage of the error which she herself is in.—This must lead to the explanation I desire. (*Goes out upon the Terrace.*)

JUL. My poor dear cousin!—(*Looking after him.*) He signs without examination. Excellent !—

HEN. (*Returning with the parchment—and putting it into her hand.*) Here is the instrument—

JUL. (*Assuming the old woman's voice.*)—Of my felicity ! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha !

HEN. What voice do I hear !

JUL. Dearest Laroche, your Priscilla's, your wife's.

HEN. My wife's ! (*Runs out upon the terrace, returns with a three branched candelabra, with which he runs towards Lady Julia, and then stops motionless at sight of her.*)

JUL. Did I imitate my Lady's voice well ? Ah little rogue, you wanted to escape me ; and I verily believe that you would have imposed upon my Lady ; but I love you, ingrate !

HEN. (*Quite bewildered.*) O, good heavens !—

JUL. Come, darling ; sympathize in the tender overflowings of my virgin heart.

HEN. Wretch !

JUL. Ah, come ; let me press you in my spotless arms.

HEN. (*Furiously.*) Thou infernal old woman ! return that fatal instrument immediately, or—

JUL. Return the instrument that makes us one ! Ah, dearest—

HEN. Instantly, I say ! Do you think that I will be the dupe of your artifices ?

JUL. Don't talk of artifice. You meant to dupe my Lady or you never would have signed. Mr. Laroche ! My Lady and Mr. Laroche indeed ! there would have been a fine affair !

HEN. (*Furiously.*) Know thou—thou creature,—that there is no such person as Mr. Laroche here. I am (*Throwing off his disguise and assuming great dignity.*) Lord Henry !

JVL. (*Affecting astonishment.*) Lord Henry!

HEN. (*With great superiority,—holding out his hand for the parchment.*) himself.

JVL. Lord Henry!—Lord Henry!—(*Walking to and fro, then suddenly stopping.*) My ruling stars owed me this for having made me wait so long!—I—(*In ridiculous raptures.*) I am a lady!

HEN. A—what?

JVL. A lady.

HEN. (*In a frantic laugh.*) A—lady!

JVL. (*Absorbed.*) I shall be a Countess!

HEN. Hug! Why you would not presume, with those grisly locks, to take advantage—

JVL. Time whitens a woman's hair, consort, as a warning to her to take every advantage.

HEN. Fiend!

JVL. Softly, softly, my Lord; a woman between—sixteen and sixty may be still passable, though you do not see me at present under the most favourable colours. But, if your transports of rage, your blind fury, could allow you to examine a little attentively what one is worth—(*Coughs consumptively.*)

HEN. (*Throwing himself into a chair.*) I am a dead man!

JVL. My asthma is getting better this spring.—

HEN. (*Groaning.*) O!—

JVL. And let me tell you, my Lord, for all the servile situation in which you have this day found me, there is good blood in my veins nevertheless. And I can truly assure your Lordship, that there was a Lady in my family before you made me one. Besides, my Lord, (*Resuming her natural voice by degrees.*) when I throw off this ponderous apron that would transform a fairy into a ducina; (*Unties it and lets it fall.*) When I draw down this catskin mitten (*Draws it off*) that conceals a hand which, though you sputtered at it so, some one might still think worthy of acceptance;—when I lay aside these green spectacles which intercept other beams than those of the sun perhaps;—(*Takes them off*) When I take off this wire-bound cap concealing tresses wherein, spite of their grizly hue, the hearts of many an incautious swain who fluttered near them have been ensnared; (*Throws off her head-dress.*) when I remove these ruffles of two grandmothers and a maiden-aunt which have weighed down arms that a dear cousin (*Archly.*) philosopher as he was—

has often vowed would make him blest; (*Takes off the ruffles.*) when I remove this cloak from off a bosom whose purity that beloved cousin never ought to have suspected;—then—perhaps, he would take *old Priscilla to wife* as readily as—Lady Julia herself.

HEN. (*Throwing himself on his knee.*) My cousin!!

JUL. (*Raising him.*) Your faithful Julia.

HEN. My mentor! (*Catching her hand.*)

JUL. (*Throwing herself into his arms.*) Your wife.

My last days in Nottingham were fortunate in the continued kindness of Mr. Wakefield, my talented friend Mr. Hicklin, and others whose tried affection made the task of parting from them most painful; but the resolution being taken to visit our old friends and our home, we proceeded to Derby, and experienced a flattering reception, in the cheering applause of all, and the immediate patronage of Sir Charles and Lady Colville. The gentlemanly feeling of Manley gave me the free use of his theatres—the illiberality of Bennett denied me his—but his petty hindrance only robbed me of “certain monies,” it could not prevent the honour shewn me in Ashby and Worcester, by the first and the fairest of either town. A paltry room in Ashby—the bad repute of Edmond’s room in Worcester—were no bars to the favour of those who crowded my performance with taste and elegance, and whose patronage, undeterred by circumstance, was a greater compliment to my deservings. “We respect, and esteem you,” said the urbane Henry

Clifton, Esq. the then Worshipful Chief Magistrate of the City.

I am now arrived at a period in my life when an awful dispensation of Providence aroused me to a confirmed sense of the uncertainty of existence, and sublunary hopes, and the necessity of a preparation for the change "after death." I have spoken of my friendship for the family of the Grundys. On our return to Ledbury their friendliness was unabated, and the affectionate attention of Mary Ann assumed a more ardent character; she appeared to live but for our happiness; she wept at our meeting, but the tear fell on a smiling cheek. "I am so happy to see you," she said, "I once thought we should never meet again on this side the grave." Poor girl, I did not think when I saw her then, glowing with health and spiritual beauty, that in a few days I should stand beside her silent tomb. The news of the return of Earl Grey to office arrived in Ledbury on the afternoon of my last performance; and the whole town being politically deranged, I was desired to postpone my entertainment to the following night. My friend's *earnest* advice determined me, and she passed a joyous evening with my family. On parting from her, she said, good humouredly, "Now remember, I do not stay out so late as this another night." The next day I passed with her, and she gave me an ivory pen, saying, "Here, keep this for my sake, for I shall never want it." There was nothing impressive in these observations at the time, but after events gave them a painful interest. An hour before the commencement of our dî-

terrific storm came on, and deeming it policy again to put off my performance, I sent a message to my friend for her opinion. She replied, "Tell him by all means to go on, his house will be crowded notwithstanding the weather; and I will call on them directly." I had been in my dressing-room making some preparations, about ten minutes, when the person with whom we lodged threw open the door, and with terror implanted on her brow, cried, "For God sake, sir, don't be alarmed unnecessarily, but Miss Grundy *is dead!*!" I flew to her late blessed home, and the melancholy truth was confirmed. She had left her house for the purpose of seeing us, and joining a large party of friends at the theatre; when, not a hundred yards from her own door, she fell dead in the street. Then the remark of the preceding night became sacred as a foreboding, and the intrinsically valueless gift, a jewel of great price. If my life extends to a thousand years, the remembrance of that fatal evening will survive all other thoughts.—My poor friend—her lifeless corpse returned over the threshold of her home, which, not an hour before, her living foot had crossed; and her last leaving was for the narrow house of the dead. In the morning, with a brother's affection, I looked upon her eyes beaming with youth, and health, and loveliness;—night, with a brother's grief, I saw them closed forever in the sleep of death! I cannot dwell on this. My afflicted friend, John Grundy, desired me to write his beloved sister's epitaph, and I believe it now is engraved on the stone which rests on "as much of goodness as can lie."

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
MARY ANN GRUNDY,
WHO PASSED FROM LIFE TO ETERNITY
ON THURSDAY, MAY 17, 1821.

eased by *sudden death* from care and pain,
whereto mourn that free which is her gain?
One her Maker called to meet her doom;
With lost for Heaven, whose pathway is the tomb!
Train each tear, be every sigh suppress'd,
The dead who die like her, in Christ are blest!

True to her kindred—by her worth endeav'd,
All loved her virtues, and old age rever'd;
With tongue spoke praise—With her example we
Solve like her to live—and live like her to die!

Death of my friend entirely destroyed my pros-
pect Ledbury; I could not play in a sepulchre, and
unlucky fate cast the gloom of the grave over the
town; and even the extreme kindness of my
friends could not alleviate my distress of heart and mind.
The scene, and the excitement attendant on
our intimacy in Monmouth, in some degree restored
myself, but my spirits never recovered their pre-
cious. Monmouth honoured me by a unanimous
vote, the influence of George Wilson, Esq. obtaining
the right. Newport disappointed me, but Devon was
attractive, and I did not despond.

* *Layes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said
This is my own, my native land;
Whose heart within him ne'er has burned,
As home his footsteps he has turned—”*

My love of localities is an enthusiasm, and when from the deck of the vessel which bore us across the Bristol channel, I beheld the romantic cliffs of my native county, my heart "burned" with recollection of my early days. Barnstaple realized every expectation, it could not do otherwise, for my friends are as consistent in well-doing as in honour. No man living is more indebted to his friends for those attentions which relieve the wants, and pour sweets in the bitter cup of existence, than I am; and I would name them, but I know my pride would be their pain. The regard of an old companion introduced me to his amiable relations in Bideford, and their interest obtained me a most liberal and flattering patronage. (40) On entering Bideford I was unknown, on leaving I was rich in the notice of many, eminent alike for their virtues and rank in society. The marked kindness of the lady-like Mrs. Rogers, in whom an elegant suavity of manner is happily blended with the best feelings of benevolence; the courteous civility of Mrs. Cochet and her fair daughters; the politeness of Admiral Cochet, T. Grant, Esq. Mrs. Carter, J. Jenkins, Esq. Mr. R. C. Hamlyn, and William Wickham, made my sojourn amongst them truly delightful. At Launceston we were detained more than five weeks by the fatal cholera, the cause of our wanderings. When the disease subsided at Plymouth we journied to Tavistock, and proved the advantage of reputation, for nothing could exceed the cordiality of our reception. My career now drew to a close; and after an absence of six years and four months, the dove of my wanderings returned to the ark of my native home.

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proscenium; and, after my final interview with the imperturbable manager, all my thoughts were directed to this “consummation devoutly to be wished.” The depression amongst all classes of society, occasioned by the recent affliction of the cholera, the absence of many respectable inhabitants, the change either in opinion or circumstance with several of my friends, rendering a performance in the theatre a hazardous speculation, I engaged the Lycaeum for three nights, and even there found “room enough.” I took leave of my earliest friends in Devonport, in the Town-Hall; and the number and rank of my audience, whilst it gratified my pride, confirmed a sense of gratitude towards those whose kindness endured to the end. The last scene of all in my “strange eventful history,” was honoured by the presence of the first families in Plymouth, who thus gave the stamp of approbation to my closing act. My heart swelled with exultation when I saw before me the representatives of the wealth, talents, and virtues of my native town; and I felt at that moment that no event in my past life became me like the leaving it. Repugnant as it may be to the wishes of my patrons on this occasion, I must, to do a great right, do a little wrong, and record the names of George Coryndon, Esq. the Worshipful the Mayor, W. H. Hawker, Esq. and John Williams, Esq. as my warmest supporters. Their influence greatly contributed to my success; and to one of these gentlemen I am indebted for more than his retiring philanthropy will allow me to express. My dream of ambition is over, and the calm comforts of a happy home are mine. I have escaped

hate of others concerns me not a jot. I had
purposed to close my book with a few retrospective and
prospective observations—to point out the many instances
of presumptuous vice triumphing, when humble virtue
is “withered in the shade”—to warn my young readers
against a profession in which distinction is generally
gained by the sacrifice of every independent, every
honest, every right feeling—to dwell on the fair prospects
of my past career, and thence infer the fallaciousness of
a player’s hopes when based on integrity. For although
my course has been marked by the protection and friend-
ship of so many eminent and excellent individuals, at the
end of nine years I have failed to reach the “topmost
height” of an actor’s life, because all my friends were
virtuous and honourable. I had purposed thus much;
but if my “plain tale” has a moral, it will be found and
applied without the aid of my directing hand; and therefore
I will not trespass further on the patience of my
reader, but thankfully take leave in the farewell address
alluded previously to my final exit.

TO MY FRIENDS AND THE PUBLIC.

On retiring from public life, it is incumbent on me to assign
the reasons for so doing, that I may sooth the disappointment of
those partial friends who have formed high expectations on my
trifling abilities; and satisfy the world generally, that pruden-
tial and conscientious motives alone take me from the stage.

To my friends, whose kindness threw a veil over my demerits, and by covering my faults made my poor talent more apparent, I owe a full explanation, because my determination will destroy many proud hopes they built on my success. They know how cruelly my hopes of competence were crushed—they know the painful circumstances, which, acting on my inclination, forced me to become an actor, and they will bear me witness, that although necessity was my master, ambition was my mistress!—I bent before the stern power of the one, but I lived in the bright smiles of the other, and followed her footsteps with steadfastness and ardour.

From the time I left Plymouth, (now more than six years,) my course has been most successful, and I possess flattering testimonials from many exalted characters, and acute critics, that my reputation has more than an imaginary existence. I have toiled unceasingly for a name, and my reward, next to the approbation of the great and good, was the cheering hope, that eventually I should become an honour to my native town. I knew Plymouth could boast among her sons, many eminent men,—and it was my constant aim, to add one more to the honourable list—as an eminent actor!—and up to a certain point, which my former bills have explained, the bright reward seemed within my grasp. But in my struggles after ‘a name,’ I found the path not so flowery as my early fancy pictured,—I knew “How hard it is to climb the forked mount, where Fame’s proud temple shines afar,”—nor did I heed the rugged way—but I paused when instead of flowers, I found my path beset with thorns. Thus much to my friends. To the Public I will now give my prudential and conscientious reasons for abjuring a profession which, independent of its humiliating accessories, is a fine field for the display of high talent and ambition.

My prudential reasons are found in the bosom of my family. I have five children dependent on me, and as I wish to see them respectable members of society, I would give them an education suited to the spread of intellect; but my present life, and limited means will not admit of this, and therefore to continue on the Stage, will be to continue them in ignorance. Ignorant, because a want of time and opportunity will prevent my giving them, more than the preparatory means of education; and unfortunately a Provincial Actor’s salary, is too scanty—too precarious to set apart the means to “buy wisdom.”—I am not one jot less ambitious, than when my theatrical life began, but the claims of my family are more powerful than the call of ambition! besides

able for the future, for old age will unfit me for exertion ;
my wandering life rendering permanent regards impossible,
the winter of my days comes on, I shall be without a
, and unless fortune should favour me, without a home,
t the home of the wretched. Of my conscientious reasons
scarcely venture to speak, fearing the warmth of my sin-
may bear the appearance of hypocrisy. I will then only
ve, that although I believe it possible an Actor may dis-
e every moral obligation as faithfully as another man, yet
ngst other objections) there are causes in his life, which too
ently call up the evil passions of the heart, and prevent all
s contemplations ; I am sure of this, and therefore I seek
repose of privacy to follow the dictates of my conscience.

us I have given my reasons, truly, and I trust satisfactorily,
ving the Stage ; my professional career commenced in
outh, and here it shall terminate !—I know not as yet how
ise to employ my energies for the welfare of my family,
t all-wise intelligence, which prompts my determination,
no doubt, point out a course.

purpose under the patronage of Gentlemen of Plymouth,
a farewell Dramatic Entertainment, to which I ask the
rt of my Friends and the Public ; when I shall bid “fare-
o all my greatness,”—and then I shall have

“ The world before me where to choose
“ My place of rest, and Providence my guide.”

ROBERT DYER.

NOTES.

THE *Grace Night* is a joyous holiday, on the Friday before the first of December. All signs of labour are removed. Laurel, candles, flowers, and gilded pumpkins, give a face of brightness, and glitter to the School Room—the kindred of the school girls throng as witnesses of their proficiency—a spacious arena is formed—and within this living arena, the youthful students recite their well-conned lessons—their task over, then comes the tea and cake—and fruits—and last of all—the gay, gay dance. Happy, happy days; compared with thy present, and heart absorbing mirth, how dull and abhorrent are the gaieties I have since partaken!

I believe, that with *two exceptions*, a Brother and Sister, who together sleep the never-ending sleep, all my young friends are living and prosperous. Long may they continue in the enjoyment of every earthly happiness. Poor Charles and his sister Mary, have long been at rest. Mary, dear Mary, was the object of my boyish love, and that love strengthened my strength, for when a man I loved her still. Like all women, whose beauty is *transparent*, and whose minds have a strength disproportioned to their bodily weakness, she fell a victim to consumption. She died in November. The previous month had been dark and boisterous—about twelve in the day, I intently requested to be raised on her pillow, and to have the window blinds drawn—her friends obeyed her wishes—just as the sun, which had hitherto been clouded, broke forth, and a beam of brilliant light shone full on her sweet face—she smiled, and whispered “beautiful”—and her lips were closed for ever. I wept beside her grave.

“I looked on thy death cold face, my lassie
I looked on thy death cold face,
An’ thou look’dst like a lily new cut i’ th’ bud
And fading in thy place !”

out the theatre bawling, “ Death! Death!”—to which the boy, shouted in a louder tone, “ *I'm a-coming, Sir!*”

The Marquis Donegal was sued in the court of King's Bench, for the sum £93. 4s. 8d. due to Bankes, for a fancy of the time of Elizabeth, made for the noble Marquis as *Lord Burleigh*. If Lords cannot pay their amateur how can commoners?—*Romeo Coates*, was ruined by his mania. I saw this gentlemen play Belcour, in the theatre, attired in a crimson velvet coat, and diamond buttons.

A celebrated private *Star*, who believed his *Othello* to be a masterpiece of acting, had all his *sublime* turned to the *ridiculous* by one of those untoward accidents so frequent in amateur shewments. In the last act, Desdemona was discovered ; the resources of the theatre, neither in room or properties, permitting a bed on the scene, a plank was placed lengthways, resting on two chairs, two pillows, and a pair of sheets being spread over all : but the lady was broad, and the board narrow, so that she lay the fair Desdemona in a most unpleasant equilibrium, especially as the chairs did not stand steadily.—The reader must take what is printed between parentheses, and in italics, to be taken in a whisper, not audible to the audience, but perfectly intelligible to the initiated behind the scenes.

C, a Bed-chamber. Desdemona in bed, asleep. A Light burning.

Enter Othello.

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul :
not name it to you, you chaste stars!
cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood,
nor that whiter skin of hers than snow,
so white as monumental alabaster : [Lays down the Sword.
I must die ; else she'll betray more men.
The light, and then—put out the light ;
I beseech thee, thou flaming minister,
To gain thy former light restore,
I repent me ; but once put out thine
shining'st pattern of excelling nature,
not where is that Promethean heat,
To gain thy light relume.— [Sets down the Taper.
I have pluck'd thy rose,
give it vital growth again ;
I must wither.—I'll smell it on the tree ; [Kissing her.
My breath, that dost almost persuade
me to break her sword ! One more ; one more ;

Oth. Yes, presently ;
herefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;
or to deny each article with oath,
annot remove, nor choak, the strong conception,
hat I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then heaven have mercy on me ! (*Oh dear.*)

Oth. I say, amen. (*You b——h lie still.*)

Des. And have you mercy, too !—I never did
ffend you, in my life ; never lov'd Cassio,
ut with such general warranty of heav'n,
s I might love. I never gave him token. (*That Prompter.*)

Oth. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.
h, perjur'd woman ! thou dost stone my heart ;
nd mak'st me call, what I intend to do,
murder, which I thought a sacrifice.
saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it, then :
never gave it him. Send for him hither,
nd let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess.

Des. What, my lord ?

Oth. That he hath—used thee—

Des. How ? unlawfully ?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He'll not say so.

Oth. No, his mouth is stopp'd :
Ionest Iago hath ta'en order for't.

Des. My fear interprets, then—What is he dead ?

Oth. I had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone. (*Make haste ; I shall be
down in a moment if you don't hold me.*)

Oth. Out, strumpet ! weep'st thou for him to my face ?

Des. O banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

Oth. (*Keep yourself up.*) Down, strumpet—

Des. Kill me, to-morrow, let me live to-night. (*I shall be over.*)

Oth. Nay, if you strive— (*You b——h, lie still.*)

Des. But half an hour.— (*My dear sir, you'll capsiz me.*)

Oth. Being done, there is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer. (*Oh, I'm off.*)

Oth. It is too late.

And in his eagerness to keep her steady, and save the scene, he placed one knee on the bed, which at once destroyed the balance, when down tumbled the fair Desdemona, with Othello bestriding her in a most ludicrous position!—In another situation, my friend was playing Frank Rochdale, in John Bull, and at the very moment that Job Thornberry says “justice is justice, Sir Simon,”—the Police Officer burst open the entrance door, crying, “Yes! justice is justice, and I’m come to take you all up, you diverting vagabonds.”

(5) Boadens is a most *gentlemanly* production—he appears to revel in good company—and if he stumbles on a character not exactly of the select, rather than seem vulgar, he immediately elevates his associate to the level of his own gentility—for instance, he says “*Dowton* was educated for an *architect!*”

(6) The Lissardo was Barnett—the present manager of the Reading and other theatres—Woolford and West’s troop of Equestrians were engaged to astonish the natives in Timour the Tartar, and wanting other stable-room, the quadrupeds were accommodated at the back of the stage, immediately over the ladies’ dressing room. On one occasion, Mrs. Kendal, a most lady-like woman, arrayed in all the finery of a Slave, was waiting her call, when a fall of water deluged her splendid attire, and made her appearance, in time for that evening, an impossibility. She sent the dresser to Barnett, stating her pitiable condition; he replied “My compliments to Mrs. Kendal, I excuse her attendance, as I feel satisfied it is impossible for her to appear under the *auspices* of Messrs. Woolford and West.”

(7) This lady afterwards became eminent in the provinces, and created no slight sensation in some of the minor London theatres, as Mrs. Wingrove.

(8) This gentleman, formerly editor of the Devonport Telegraph, was an eccentric, though clever man. He once lectured on vegetable substances, and from his dwelling particularly on the Tatarian Lamb Plant—or as the Russians call it—*Burometz*, the Lamb, he ever after was known by the cognomen of “Vegetable Mutton.” Darwin thus beautifully describes this remarkable production of nature.

Cradled in snow, and fann’d by arctic air,
Shines, gentle Barometz, thy golden hair;
Rooted in earth each cloven hoof descends
And round and round her flexible neck she bends;

Crops the grey coral moss and hoary thyme,
Or laps with rosy tongue the melting rime ;
Eyes with mute tenderness her distant dam
Or seems to bleat, a Vegetable Lamb.

(9) Extracts—

“ **PLYMOUTH GAZETTE.**—Had Mr. Dyer taken Frederick Bramble, and Mr. Jackson, Sir Charles Cropland, we think both characters would have been supported with greater success.”

“ **PLYMOUTH JOURNAL.**—We would not willingly neglect to do justice to *Lovel*, which character was sustained throughout with great ability—He personated the clown with great effect—the drunken scenes were admirably given, and the develope was spirited.”

“ **DOCK TELEGRAPH.**—Sir Charles Cropland, the fashionable libertine, evinced strong proofs of talent, and an acquaintance with stage business worthy a practised actor. *Lovel* proved his claims to histrionic talent well founded ; his assumption of the gawkish rusticity of Jemmy, was sustained throughout with considerable ability.”

(10) His Grace, the Duke of Northumberland, is known at Launceston by the familiar title of *Uncle*—Why? The reformers of the scheduled borough will inform my inquiring reader.

(11) This talented creature deserved a better fate than to die in a mad-house—which was her fate!—But the heart breaks with the pang of blighted affection, and reason is lost beneath the pressure of unmerited distress.

(12) The Brunton family are celebrated for their histrionic ability. The elder Brunton was a man of fine mind, and acknowledged excellence. The intellect and virtues she inherited from her father, elevated Miss Brunton to the Peerage—and the beautiful Mrs. Merry was inferior in nothing, but good fortune, to her sister. John Brunton, had he been always fortunate, had been always great; and his daughter, Mrs. Yates, adds lustre “to the line from whence she springs.”

(13) Actors' call their weekly income “*the Ghost*,” I suppose from the uncertainty of its appearance, or that when it does appear, it is usually about 12 o'clock. Well might the country landlady say “Ay!—the players are funny folks, but they do not pay.” They are the merriest practical jokers of all created beings. He who obtains great, and unexpected applause, is presented with a piece of coal, because he has been *coal-ing it*; and that actor who may be entirely engrossed by his character, is waited on with a rope, for the purpose of drawing him up, because he is said to be *down a pit*.

(14) I trust I shall be pardoned for my many extracts from the public papers; they were a source of great pride to me, on their first publication, and now I give them place, as progressive testimonials of character, which, being appended as notes, my friends may either read or reject.

"*Playbox in the York.*—Our spirited manager, Mr. Brunton, and his *corps dramatique*, commenced their theatrical campaign on Wednesday night last, when Sheridan's comedy of "The School for Scandal" was performed. The house was very full, and the lower boxes presented a scene of elegance and beauty. We were well pleased at witnessing the reception the old favourite of the public met with. Mrs. Yates, on her entrance, was greeted most enthusiastically, as was Miss Huddart; Mrs. Bennett also partook of the plaudits of the company. Applauses were also strongly manifested on the appearance of Messrs. Brunton, S. Bennett, Stuart, Wilton, &c. Since the last season the company has been reinforced by our townsmen, Mr. Dyer: the high reception this gentleman met with on his making his *debut* must have been highly gratifying, the applause, which was continued for a considerable time, was reiterated from every part of the house. Mrs. Dyer we have before noticed is also engaged. A young lady, a Miss Flindell, also made her *debut* to a Plymouth audience; the character she assumed would not permit us to judge of her talents; her timidity is excusable in a first appearance, but we would advise her to keep up her voice, as it was with difficulty she could be heard. The characters throughout the piece were well supported. Mr. S. Bennett's personification of the touchy, though at times humorous *Sir Peter Teazle*, was in his best style. Mr. Brunton displayed the volatile conduct and thoughtlessness of *Charles Surface*, with a true ease and becoming spirit. The pretended moral, but hypocritical character, *Joseph Surface*, was well maintained by Mr. Dyer, and the moral sentiments so continually ready on all occasions, were delivered with a sanctity of look and manner perfectly natural. Messrs. Wilton, Stuart, and Jones, supported the parts of *Crabtree*, *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, and *Sir Oliver Surface*, with great *solat*. Mrs. Yates, as *Lady Teazle*, was every thing that we could wish; she elicited the highest applause: her mode of vexing her old "Lovy," and her contrition when she discovered the treachery of her pretended friends, were alike admirable. This was followed by "The Bear and the Bushaw," a very laughable piece in one act, in which Messrs. Brunton and S. Bennett displayed to good effect their comic powers. Mrs. Bennett sang during the evening several songs which were highly applauded. The scenery is entirely new and is executed in the first style; several of the scenes, from their brilliant decorations, called down the applause of the audience. The house has been thoroughly cleaned and fresh coloured, and, to add to the comforts of those who sit in the pit, the seats have been furnished with backs. In justice to Mr. Bowden and the *Orchestre* we should observe, that the overtures, from some of the best masters, were played in a very superior style.

"*The Outlaw*, "Rob Roy," was personated by Mr. Dyer; this arduous part was ably filled, and the many fine points well managed; the scene where he is betrayed by *Rashleigh Osbaliston*, Mr. Dyer depicted most forcibly—he was much applauded."

DAY.—“Othello,” and “Smoked Miser.” Shakspere, in tragedy, exemplified nearly all the passions which have a place in the breast; with the most interesting material he produced a play that has greatly contributed to establish that fame of his, which he deserves. The pen of the bard of Avon has here skilfully delineated the workings of the human mind, when under the influence of that noblest of all passions, jealousy. The incidents adduced are of extraordinary description; yet, the manner in which they are carried forward is perfectly natural, and clearly shows that the writer had a clear conception of the human heart, under every circumstance. The open-hearted, though too susceptible Moor, Othello, was演説ated by Mr. Dyer, and we have a satisfaction in saying, creditably—the character is a very arduous one; the workings of the heart are frequently required to be displayed, without the assistance of violence or violent action—there is a combination of tenderness and energy to display, with an appearance of being calm, while labouring under a persuasion of having been wronged in the tenderest point. To depict those highly wrought points, we need scarcely say, requires a person of considerable merit—this appellation Mr. Dyer is well entitled to; he was most effective throughout—his appearance as if he had been most attentively his author; not only in the declamatory parts, but where the inward feelings of the man was to be depicted, was excellent. We particularly noticed a part, though apparently a repetition of itself, yet it was made by Mr. D. most interesting; we allude to his interview with Desdemona, in the third act: prior to his demand for her handkerchief—Desdemona says, while her hand was clasped in his,

—“Twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth.—A liberal hand: the hands of old gave hearts:
But our new heraldry is—hands not hearts.

ly was so feelingly given, and combined with an action so naturally: it plainly appeared that the heart of the speaker was, in his opinion, the more splendid parts of the piece were alike forcibly produced; in a word, we think that the most fastidious person could not have been pleased. Mr. D. was repeatedly and most warmly applauded.

“The Day after the Wedding” followed, in which Miss KIMBLE and Mr. DYER, kept the house in a complete state of laughter; this is a very humorous afterpiece.

“Don Juan,” by Mr. Dyer, was performed in a chaste style, and very creditably: the interest that the poet gave to the character was preserved, and several points managed well.

Mr. Dyer, as *Captain Absolute*, looked the character well, and did it ably—his feigned submission to his father, on his marriage, was well managed, as was his interview with *Mrs. Malaprop* and his wife *Lydia*.

Mr. Dyer looked the character of *Lord Hastings* admirably; indeed we have seldom seen a part more correctly delineated, either in dress, or in its general representation; he was most brilliant and suitable,

his interview with *Richard*, where the crafty Prince opens to him the views entertained of the young Prince, and in which the loyalty of *Hastings* to the late King, being the touch-string of his heart, was developed, was maintained most forcibly and with great effect."

"Mr. Dyer, as *Jaffier*, completely realized our expectations; as the piece increased in interest and the plot proceeded, the actor's exertions kept pace. The first scene--his interview with *Pierre*, when the latter is about to be conveyed to prison, was admirably enacted, and the smooth flowing and elegant diction of the author, was done the most ample justice to. The following scene with *Belvidera*, where he is almost induced to plunge the dagger into her breast, so much is he irritated by the fate of *Pierre*, but being overcome by his love for her, he flings the fatal instrument from him, exclaiming—

"I am, I am a coward, witness Heaven,
Witness it Earth, and ev'ry being witness:
'Tis but one blow I yet, by immortal love,
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee."

equally exhibited the abilities of Mr. D. His final interview with *Belvidera* and his friend *Pierre*, were alike eminently successful as those we before enumerated."

(15) An excellent likeness of this lady, as *Belvidera*, is in the possession of my good friend, Mrs. Bowden, Bedford-street. The portrait is by Mr. Gant, who has realized all the high expectations formed on this, one of the first productions of his easel.

(16) Criticism—

"MONDAY.—The tragedy of "BERTRAM," from the pen of Maturin, was presented this evening. The character of *Bertram*, from which the tragedy is named, is of a description that requires great judgment to delineate truly, and a considerable degree of physical power to give to it a full effect; a bold and vigorous exertion being necessary for the correct delineation of the more violent emotions of the mind. *Bertram* is a "wonderful being,"—the deprivation of all that he held dear, the misfortunes that drove him from the society of his friends, have tended to render him a very wretch—an outlaw and an outcast he is represented—his countenance is never lit up by a smile—his heart is rendered nearly obdurate, by the sufferings he has endured—distressed and dejected he stands, as it were, alone, like a lofty cedar, fallen and blighted in a forest, where every other tree had been swept away by a hurricane; his looks present the picture of despair, yet a nobleness is preserved even in his misery—such is *Bertram*. The character was supported by Mr. Dyer, and is the best opportunity we have had of fairly judging of that gentleman's abilities, since he has joined the present company. We were highly gratified in witnessing the performance, and are well pleased in being enabled to state that he was eminently successful throughout. From the first scene to the last, the interest of the character was supported,

the feeling that the poet bestowed on it, was faithfully preserved. his happiest efforts was, in the scene where he discovers Imogene castle of St. Aldobrand, and she acquaints him that she is the his bitterest enemy—this knowledge, with the recollection of his and not extinguished love acts on his feelings, till he almost es mad. This scene afforded an excellent display of physical and tactual power. In the other parts of the piece he was highly im- e. The scene, where he flings the dagger from him, and surren- himself, was judiciously managed. His death scene was no less so. ghest applause was repeatedly manifested throughout the house.

) Mr. John Crisp—the very opposite of his successor Ben- Crisp had the reputation of being a Bashaw amongst his but I think unjustly. He told me the anxiety attending the gement of seven or eight theatres, occupied his thoughts irely, he perhaps often appeared reserved and distant, and straction might be construed as pride. This I can believe whim for coach-driving was one of his eccentricities, which ed his company, more than his supposed grandeur—he a stage coach for the accommodation of the ladies and men, and honoured them by driving from town to town, ey paid for his condescension, by sundry upsets. On one on, a Mrs. Chambers, with a lap full of ripe gooseberries, posite inside passenger to Mr. G. Crisp, and after frequent jolts, and responsive cries of "Oh, Mr. John will turn er again"—Mr. John *did* turn them over, and Mr. George's head, plump full in Mrs. Chamber's gooseberry store!— ing released from his unpleasant situation, he placed his on his head, and feeling the mashy moisture, he cried out treme terror, "John, John, I'm a dead man, my brains shed out." But Crisp was a good actor, though an un- driver, for I remember his *Crack* and *Nipperkin* had the of sterling worth. When I last saw him, he had left the and settled in the neighbourhood of Worcester.

) Aylmer, a true son of Hibernia, dissipated an indepen- , and died in want. Not one actor in five hundred dies nt—and it would be a melancholy but instructive work, that red the final earthly doom of every son and daughter of age. My associations have been, with apparently, the most nate, and I grieve to say not one of the number went down e narrow house in comfort. What then has been or will be ate of the vast professional majority who live on low salaries, e precarious pittance of sharing schemes?—what, but cheer- pillows, and charitable graves. We look to the metropolis, theatrical fortunes, and we find some members of the

profession with splendid accumulations of wealth, but then how few in comparison with those, who breath in the Bench—figure in the Insolvent Court—or “sicken with hope deferred,” in the parlour of the well-known Halfpenny Tavern.

On the 15th May, 1833, expired the celebrated tragedian, Edmund Kean. He appeared in London, as *Shylock*, in the “*Merchant of Venice*,” January 25th, 1814. It has been calculated that, during a period of nineteen years, he realized more than £150,000, by the exercise of his powerful talent; yet he died poor, and, from the wreck of his fortune, a few of “Honour’s baubles” only were preserved to his son, not as the inheritance of his father’s wealth, but as memorials of his father’s fame. A single page would contain the names of all the actors who have died in the possession of their acquired riches.—A volume might be filled by those whose delinquencies have left them scarcely wherewithal to purchase the “nails for a coffin.”

(19) Criticism—

“Our theatrical corps commenced their career, for this season, on Monday evening last. The announcements selected were the “*Clandestine Marriage*,” and “*The Noble Soldier*.” We observed with pleasure, that the audience most warmly applauded the favourites of the preceding seasons; Messrs. Dyer, Weston, Scott, and Gardiner, with Miss H. Moore and Miss Kizmar, on their first appearing, were received by long and loud plaudits—particularly the first-named gentleman. The character of *Lord Oglesby* was presented by Mr. BERNARD, a gentleman once manager of our Old Theatre, and who has since played on the boards of Covent Garden. His conception of the character was good—his delineation powerful, and his performance proved, that, in his more youthful days, he must have been an actor of considerable attainments; he was much applauded. In the character of *Mrs. Heidelberg*, we were gratified by the appearance of our old favourite, Mrs. Weston, who is engaged by Mr. Brunton, until the opening of the Bath Theatre, where she has a permanent engagement. Her reception was most flattering; she maintained the character of the *Antiquated Dame* in the most amusing style, and dressed the part to perfection. We shall be sorry to lose Mrs. Weston; she must be a great acquisition to any company. Miss H. Moore, from the short notice given her, of the character she was to assume, *Miss Sterling*, had not sufficient time to study it, and was therefore obliged to read her part. Miss Kizmar looked as charming as ever, and played *Fanny*, most delightfully. The other characters were generally well supported, and the piece went off with applause. The house was well attended.”

“**Wednesday.**—This evening were presented the “*Benevolent Jew*,” by Cumberland, a piece, at the present period, but seldom performed; with the laughable afterpiece of “*Amateurs and Actors*.” Mr. BERNARD personated *Sleek*, the “*Benevolent Jew*,” which character he

ayed in a superior style. Many fine points in the piece he defended most forcibly; indeed his portrait of the man, presenting to the actor the paradox of benevolence and rigid parsimony, in one person, kept up with power, and a considerable depth of feeling. Mr. B. in *Sheva*, to his performance of *Lord Ogleby*. He was y applauded. Mr. Dyer, as *Charles Radcliff*, went through the with great animation and feeling; he was quite in point through- and was warmly applauded."

0) Incledon, whose very name awakens all the recollections of sh melody, was most jealous of rivalry, and suspicious of ininations against him. Braham's success gave him great un- less, and when Sinclair appeared—he said "Ay, they want knock me up—first they brought a *Jew's-harp* against me, and they bring a *Scotch Fiddle*." The last song Incledon ever , was in the kitchen of the Rein-Deer, Mealcheapen-street, reister. He attended the glee club, as usual, but he declined ing, and left the room, rather depressed in spirits—by mere elent he strolled into the kitchen, and recovering his good our, gathered the servants about him, and gave them " Now well my trim-built wherry," in most brilliant style, and then ing into gloom, he left the house—not long after he died.

21) The story about Ross and the £100 note, sent annually a repentant gentleman on whom the powerful acting of the her in George Barnwell produced a saving effect, reads very in the play-bill, and may be true, though it is more than ovable, the whole was merely a fiction (technically—*gag*) to Ross into notice. We have had many excellent Barnwell's e his day, and (unless the youth of this century are bet- than those of 1700) many London apprentices—" swerved in virtue's path"—have seen the fate of him, " who wise too " yet failed to be awakened to a sense of error. The tale Ross's proselyte is suspicious. I played George Barnwell in Carinarthen theatre, and my speaking the line " avoid lewd men false as they are fair" offended the ladies of the pavé so only, they hissed me heartily, and not one of them came to my efit!

22) J. R. Brewer, a native poet, to whom the often applied es of Gray are most applicable,

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness in the desert air."

for his unobtrusive modesty is equalled only by his genius; amongst his miscellaneous pieces is this epigram:

“ The *Run* came and overflowed the *Bank*,
The *Town* it did oppress it :
The *Mud* came next—what means the *Mud* ?
Ye noble-minded, guess it.”

Not long before the “run came,” the clever boy young Burke played Doctor Pangloss in the theatre, and taking up the note which Zekiel dropt, he made the usual local joke, by saying—“Sir William Elford—firm as the Bank of England—good.” The audience loudly applauded; and the worthy Baronet who chanced to be present acknowledged the compliment by a bow.

(23) Poor Ned Smith, the author of this article, did me much disservice by taking an unfounded prejudice, and joining a certain Doctor, in the attempt to set up an impostor on the downfall of my authority: but he is in his grave, and I will only cherish the recollection of his merits.

(24)

“ York, April 24, 1826.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am favoured by your communication which I should have replied to ere this, but I have been considering how an opening could be made for you in the line you wish to undertake; and I find that for the present I must give up the idea; however I have little doubt that a line *may be* vacant by the time we open in Hull, and as you seem desirous to accept an engagement in my establishment, and have sent me a permanent address, you may rely on hearing from me the moment any change is in agitation; till which time I am, dear Sir, with sentiments of sincere respect,

Your's very truly

T. J. DOWNE.”

(25) When I visited Wells, party feeling ranged under the opposing terms of *Bricks and Mortar*, and *Cement* kept the city in continual discord, and to this cause perhaps, rather than an indifference to our merits, might be attributed the badness of the season; for there were many choice spirits, lovers of the drama, whose example would have given fashion to the theatre, had peace reigned within the walls. Amongst them Dr. Bernard and Capt. Dobbyn held the chief place—Capt. Dobbyn was once a celebrated “Bath amateur,” and paid £1000 damages to the father of the more celebrated Mrs. Waylett, for his *gaietie du cœur*, in eloping with the chaste dame! Pea-green Hayne paid £3000, for a breach of promise of marriage to (the then) Miss Foote.

A British Jury "the dragon that guards the Hesperian fruit" certainly offer by such verdicts a premium for the cupidity of free-thinking fathers!

(26) Theatrical patrons frequently signalize a *certain person* in a company, whose claims to the distinction are founded only in caprice. Doctor Morgan amused himself and his friends by protegeing the least talented person amongst us. In his desire to promote that persons benefit interest he proposed arrangements destructive of mine, which I effectually resisted, but he yielded his point with an ill-grace in the following letter.

" My Dear Sir,

" Altho' I differ from you in *every* opinion upon this unlucky subject, I will only take up your time in repeating one of them, by shewing you that I am possessed of a thorough knowledge of theatrical feelings. I give up Mr. H. Lee, Icilius and all—only I beg you will assist Mr. G. P's inexperience by pointing out a good comedy, or Melo-Drama not quite thread-bare that *can be done*—tho' indeed Virginius you will say may still be done—but Appius is a bad part for a lady, and the total eclipse of all nether charms by the Roman toga would be very objectionable to any of the ladies who could do it.

A STAR ! ! !

I hope the stars will be propitious on your night in spite of conjunction, relative between Mr. Lloyd, and Mrs. Lee, and am dear Sir,

Very truly your's

J. G. MORGAN.

His powers of ridicule were notorious, and he once gave vent to the overflowings of his "bitter gall" in this sarcastic epistle.

" Monday Night.

" My Dear Sir,

" A little foresight is a good thing, so I add a few hints in case you should be too hurried to-morrow evening to have anything ready.

Always your's

J. G. M.

APOLOGY,
BY PARTICULAR DESIRE,

For this Night only,

BY

MR. DYER.

" Ladies and Gentlemen,

" I have the honour to be so unhappy as to announce, that in consequence of a sudden return of Mrs. Lee's occasional malady it will be impossible for her to perform the part of Mrs. Malaprop—which Mrs. Woods has kindly undertaken at a short notice.

• I am also so wretched as to inform you, that in consequence of Mr. Well's protracted sore throat, and Miss Lee's incapability of being loved by any other person adequate to the character, the parts of Lydia Languish and Captain Absolute, will by particular desire be entirely omitted. I am also so miserable as to inform you, that Miss Syle has caught such a cold and boaster from Mrs. Dr. —'s team and sitting in her damp cloths, that Miss Hindell has, on no notice at all, kindly undertaken to read her songs. Ladies and gentlemen, I beg leave for myself and the other performers and non-performers, to congratulate ourselves on the business of the season and the glorious indulgence of the public, and with one more apology to take my leave.

" In consequence of Miss Lee's complete imperfection in her part of Little Pickle, we shall, with your permission, substitute for the farce of the Spoiled Child, the appropriate entertainment of the Devil to Pay."

Medical gentlemen " physic the players for nothing," and in return they are generally free of the theatre. An eminent deceased physician for years attended the old theatre in Plymouth, where a chair was always placed for him at the stage door, commonly called Doctor—door, and which remained open only while the Doctor occupied his station—there he sat to the terror of the actors, for on the slightest fault, he expressed his disapprobation in an audible grunt—but if any unfortunate wight exceeded his endurance, he would start up in a frenzy—close the door with violence, and hurry out of the theatre, ejaculating at every step " Assafateda, by G. d." A friend of mine, whose equestrian set out reminded me of four lines of "the Devil's Walk—"

" He saw an apothecary on a white horse
Ride by, on his avocations,
And the devil smiled, for it put him in mind
Of Death in the Revelations!"

good humouredly satisfied my scruples as to the free gift of medicines, by saying " My good Sir, it costs little; one ounce of Tartar Emetic (sixpence) and two pound of Salts (sevenpence) will purge and sweat 40,000 people; and I give you gentlemen nothing else—one grain of Tartar Emetic in a solution of Salts, coloured yellow or red, with the syrups of saffron or poppy, is the universal military medicine, and why not the universal player's physic?" I will do my friend the justice to say, that if quinine had been essential, it would have formed part in his prescriptions.

(27) Dr. Tucker honoured me by his acquaintance, and I am grateful to him for the preservation of my child's life, and the restoration of my own health. In him professional skill is combined with a most agreeable suavity of manner. I should be

cellent friends Selwood, Geo. Knight, and Margrie.

(28) On the night of our performance of *William Tell*, Clara her's acting in Albert, so wrought on the maternal feelings of a y, she fainted, and her friends carried her from the house in state of insensibility. The next day the principal Patroness of theatre told me that if I desired to keep her and her party ay, I should play *William Tell*, for much as they admired y could not bear again the intense agony created in the scenes h Albert. Cooke was hissed in Iago, Mrs. Bunn, heard "the pitolan bird" in *Millwood*, and others have received similarly invocal compliments; but none are recorded of such truth and cieacy as this, of which I am most proud.

(29) Elliston, during his management of the Worcester theatre, on his benefit night advertised a splendid display of fire-works but the play and farce ended, and not a single squib was pre- red for the gratification of the crowded and impatient audience at last the call for "Fireworks! Fireworks! Fireworks!" became ifically loud, and the stage-manager John Crisp, and the armed company, expected nothing less than a demolishing row when the undaunted manager stept before the curtain and bly addressed his friends "Ladies and Gentlemen, I have ready for your amusement the most splendid pyrotechnic display ever beheld in this or any other town in the kingdom; but it is y duty to inform you, that if the fireworks be exhibited, my gineer is of opinion *they will positively blow the roof off the eutre*, such is their strength and magnitude! but *you shall have em!*" (cries of no, no, Mr. Elliston, and a general rising)— I have never deceived you, my dear patrons, and *you shall have em!*" (cries of no, no, no, and a partial move)—" My stage- anager, Mr. Crisp, there he is in my private box, will attest e fact. The Fire-works will positively *blow the roof off the eutre*—but *you shall have them!*" and continuing his promise *you shall have them*," the frightened public rushed from the eutre amidst reiterated shouts of "No, no, no, Mr. Elliston."

(30) A provincial paper, commenting on Mrs. Glover's con- oversy with a Newcastle Clergyman, says, in reference I presume her assertion, that gentlemen of the *Cloth* were not more imma- late than the children of the *Sock*—"for while a clerical delin- ent is at once expelled from the class of which his vices render m unworthy, no species of infamy can reduce an actor or actress

antly," in the language of signs. The dumb-boy distinctly said "I say my boy, this is a nice hot day, and as I shan't be led to go out with cart this afternoon, let us go up to the steps, and have a bathe about two o'clock"— and Kitto said "Ay, your dirty face wants washing—but you are a bad swimmer; however, I'll take care you shan't be an old fellow!" A dumb gentleman travelled on the road with me between Worcester and Birmingham, and one of the luxuriate scenes on the road called forth a beautifully forc'd and even a poetical expression of gratitude to the Almighty for his goodness in creating the world for his creatures— which are unequal to the fervour and truth of his manner.

Criticisms—

NOTTINGHAM REVIEW, May 27th, 1831.

"Mr. Dyer, the stage-manager, enacted the *king-killing thane*, with judgment, his reading and pourtraying of the character being very good; and the banquet scene was especially good."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL, June 4th, 1831.

"The difficult part of *Evander* was sustained by Mr. Dyer, in a manner which did credit to that gentleman's conception of the character. In the drama of *Obi*, Mr. Dyer earned considerable applause by his representation of *Three-finger'd Jack*. In scenes of stirring interest this gentleman appears to advantage; he is evidently a man of understanding, and we would recommend him to study a rather more classical taste in his tragic heroes; he is somewhat apt to assume too much of a melo-dramatic air."

June 11th.—Mr. Dyer played *Pierre* with considerable judgment. *Pierre*, as *Dumont*, deserved high praise, particularly in the last scene where he sooths the broken spirit of his wife, by the declaration of his "forgiveness."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL, June 25, 1831.

"Mr. Dyer is entitled to commendation for the manner in which he sustained the character of the *Patriot King*, and his exertions as acting-manager contributed very materially to the stage effect of the piece. *Warlock* he played the *Warlock* in a very effective and judicious manner."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL, July 9th, 1831.

"Wednesday evening, Mr. Dyer took his Benefit, and with a liberality which did honour to his philanthropy, pledged himself to give one-half the profit to the relief of the Starving Irish—the appeal was not met in the manner we expected. The interesting play of the *Exile* was acted, in which Mr. Dyer sustained the part of *Daran* in a judicious, and highly effective style.

(38) Bury and Cambridge Criticisms—

“CAMBRIDGE PAPER, 1831.—The *Peregrine* of Mr. Dyer was a most judicious performance, but the character does not give much scope for the display of talent.”

“BURY PAPER, 1831.—Mr. Dyer's qualifications are of a high order; though his voice is somewhat of the deepest—he is an actor in the school of Young, but we suggest that Mr. Young owes his celebrity, not to his mannerisms, but to the study of nature.”

“BURY PAPER, 1831.—The *Shylock* of Mr. Dyer was highly respectable. We were wrong in supposing this gentleman an imitator of Young—he never saw him but twice, and then under very disadvantageous circumstances. He very justly applies the remark of *Puff* in the Critic—‘two people happened to hit on the same idea, and Shakespeare thought of it first.’”

“BURY PAPER, 1831.—The *Ned Grayling* of Mr. Dyer was a most finished and effective performance, and has been the best opportunity we have had of witnessing his great powers—which are of the first order.”

“COLCHESTER PAPER, 1831.—The *Miles Bertram* of Mr. Dyer was a most correct performance, and we expect he will add greatly to the high opinion we have already formed of him.”

(39) Nottingham and Derby Criticisms—

NOTTINGHAM REVIEW, Feb. 24th, 1832.

“It is with pleasure we notice the success of Mr. Dyer's benefit, at the Theatre, on Monday evening—he is decidedly an actor of superior acquirement, and merits the applause which his exertions obtained. We believe, “Scenes of the Passions” is a compilation of Mr. Dyer's, and if so, it reflects great credit on his judgment, for the design is novel, and its execution truly successful; the attention of the audience is kept alive from the first scene to the last, and we never heard more rapturous applause than that which rewarded his correct display of passion in *Bertram*; his *Virginius* and *Fitzarden* were equally good as displays of his great powers in the higher walks of the drama, whilst his *Daggerwood* was inimitable as a burlesque—in short we think Mr. Dyer the chief of strolling actors. Mrs. Dyer is a clever little woman, and for the *Reasons* he gives, we wish him every success in the speculation, in which untoward circumstances have compelled him to embark, for his fine little family.

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL, Saturday, Feb. 25th, 1832.

“THEATRE.—The Theatre on Monday evening was fully and fashionably attended, for the benefit of our late talented stage-manager (Mr. Dyer,) to whose ability we have always borne high, because just testimony; but his acting in his judicious selection called “Scenes of the Passions” outdid our warmest expectations: the power of the master was apparent in every change, and in the marked identity of

ter, we forgot that *Felix*, *Virginius*, *Hotspur*, *Aranza*, *Fitzarden*, *Daggerwood*, were pourtrayed by the same Actor. *Virginius*, *Armen*, *Bertram*, and *Daggerwood*, were particularly good—In all cases Mr. Dyer was ably assisted by his pretty little wife. By the way, a Morbus commencing its desolating ravages at Newcastle, Mr. Dyer was disappointed of a lucrative engagement, as the acting manager of the theatre there, and we understand that circumstances have induced him on getting up an entertainment, with which he purposed visiting all those towns where he is known and esteemed in his private as well as public character. We wish him the success he unquestionably deserves, for independent of his merit he has “five reasons,” in view of five fine children for requiring the support of his friends and public; and we trust the united appeal of a clever actor, and fond wife will not be made in vain to the patrons of the Drama.”

DERBY MERCURY, Wednesday, March 7th, 1832.

THEATRE.—We are sorry to observe that the performances advertised in benefit of Mr. Dyer are postponed until Friday evening next, in consequence of the sudden and severe illness of Mrs. Dyer. It is to be hoped this circumstance will not injure his interests; the box plan of the theatre is honoured by many names, and if a clever and intelligent, and worthy man, may calculate on success, we are sure Dyer will be rewarded by an overflowing house.”

DERBY MERCURY, Wednesday, March 14th, 1832.

THEATRE.—We have much pleasure in confirming the favourable notice expressed by the Nottingham Journal, of Mr. Dyer's performance. It is indeed an interesting entertainment, and the exertions of himself and his clever little wife call for our highest commendations. We receive, that by desire of several ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Dyer will add his performance to-morrow evening with some additional novel scenes for the benefit of Mrs. Dyer. We most earnestly recommend him to the support of the Public.”

DERBYSHIRE COURIER, Saturday, March 17th, 1832.

THEATRICALS AT DERRY.—A dramatic melango, in which Mr. and Mrs. Dyer formerly attached to the Derby Theatre (the former as stage-manager) took the chief parts, was presented to “the public” on Thursday evening. The other performers were their infant children, who “mutely, but eloquently” for their parents, being appropriately dressed as the “five reasons” why Mr. Dyer (following the illustrious example of Mrs. Siddons) appealed to the public patronage. The scenes included “Tales of the Sea,” the best of which (the scene of Richard Parker) was very well sustained. “Scenes of the Deep” followed, in which Mr. and Mrs. Dyer displayed a versatility of action which deserves praise. The extract from “Sylvester Daggerwood” was particularly laughable. An extravaganza, in which Mrs. Dyer took four characters, concluded the scenic part of the performances. The recitation, by Mr. Dyer, of “Dryden’s Ode, on Alexander’s Death” afforded him ample scope for the display of high dramatic power. The audience rewarded this recitation with loud and long continued applause. We must add the characters were well dressed in very appropriate costumes.”